

A  
COLLECTION  
OF  
EVANGELICAL DISCOURSES  
ON  
Fifteen Passages of Scripture,  
ADAPTED TO THE  
FAMILY AND CLOSET.

By the late Reverend

MR CHARLES IRVINE, *K*

Sometime Minister of the Gospel at LUNAN, and afterwards at MARYTOWN.

Published for the Benefit of his Daughters.

*We preach Christ crucified.* 1 COR. i. 23.

*I determined not to know any thing,—save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* 1 COR. ii. 2.

*Christus mihi carior auro.* AUST.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by J. REID, for the Author's Daughters;

Sold by W. GRAY, front of the Exchange.

---

MDCCLXXII

9



C. O. L. A. C. T. I. O. N.

W. H. L. A. C. T. I. O. N.

T. A. M. I. L. I. A. R. I. A. N.



THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

PTA

X X X

TO  
THE NOBLEMEN,  
GENTLEMEN,  
LADIES,  
MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL,  
AND  
PRIVATE CHRISTIANS,  
WHO HAVE BEEN GENEROUSLY PLEASED  
TO ENCOURAGE THIS UNDERTAKING;  
THE  
FOLLOWING REMAINS  
OF THE  
WORTHY AUTHOR,  
CALCULATED  
TO PROMOTE GENUINE CHRISTIANITY,  
AND  
ADVANCE SERIOUS RELIGION,  
IN  
THE FAMILY AND CLOSET,  
ARE,  
IN NAME OF MR IRVINE'S DAUGHTERS,  
WITH  
THE HIGHEST SENSE OF GRATITUDE,  
MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THE EDITOR.



# ADVERTISEMENT.



**T**HE Editor hereby gives notice, that if this collection of sermons shall meet with suitable encouragement, he will issue proposals for printing another volume of Mr Irvine's sermons in a smaller form, at the price of 3 s. and 4 s. to be paid on delivery, in order to procure some further assistance to his daughters, whose circumstances stand in need of the further aids of Christian benevolence. And he assures the Public, that these other discourses will be no way inferior to those contained in this volume, and may be useful to both saints and sinners. If any humane and charitable Christians shall be pleased to promote this laudable design, it is entreated they will give in their names to the AUTHOR'S DAUGHTERS, to W. GRAY bookseller, or to J. REID printer.

N. B. As the Editor did not know Mr IRVINE, he is indebted, for the following particulars of his life and character, to some persons who were acquainted with him.

## P R E F A C E.

**M**R CHARLES IRVINE, author of the following sermons, descended from the ancient family of Drum, in the county of Aberdeen, was educated at the university of St Andrew's, first settled minister at Lunan, in the presbytery of Aberbrothock, and afterwards translated to Marytown, in the presbytery of Brechin, of which parish he died minister in 1737, aged little above fifty.

He was an excellent scholar, well versed in all the branches of theological learning; a solid, judicious, and exercised Christian; an orthodox, lively, and pathetic preacher; a faithful, zealous, and painful minister, who loved to spend and be spent in the service of his divine Master; of a sweet and agreeable disposition, an affectionate husband, an indulgent parent, a kind master, and an useful neighbour. He was greatly esteemed by his brethren in the ministry, and often consulted by them in intricate cases, who paid the utmost attention to his salutary advice. His indefatigable application to his ministerial work endeared him to the congregations where he laboured, and his memory is favourable among them to this day, and to all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance.

He was upright, honest, and steady in the public cause of God and religion, without wavering or changing sides; a zealous asserter of religious liberty, especially in the settlement of Christian congregations, opposing all violent methods, as foreign to the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom; a declared foe to vice and immorality, which he constantly testified against, without fearing the faces of men, or courting their favour; an adversary to all heresy and error,



and warmly attached to the excellent standards of the church of Scotland. He studied the peace and unity of the church, but without departing from what he was persuaded was truth; and he heavily lamented the unhappy divisions and animosities which prevailed in his time, and yet subsist, to the great hurt of Christianity, and the dishonour of the religion of Jesus.

Often was he employed at sacramental occasions, where he was a most useful assistant, and was much followed by the godly from different and distant places. He was a skilful casuist, and well qualified for speaking a word in season to distressed souls. For this purpose he was frequently sent for, sometimes without the bounds of his own particular charge; and was often heard to bless the God of all grace, who had made him useful to some persons even in their departing moments, and was sometimes much refreshed with these charitable visits. A considerable number, not only among those under his own pastoral inspection, but in the adjacent parishes, could date their first serious impressions from occasional hearings of this good man, and would own and honour him as their spiritual father.

Though he was of a tender and delicate constitution of body, and for many years troubled with two very excruciating distempers, the gout and stone; yet he not only diligently and regularly performed his usual pulpit-exercises, but visited and catechized his people once every year, and sometimes oftener, that he might know the state of the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer. He was impressed with a deep sense of the importance of the ministerial function, and laboured earnestly to promote the salvation of immortal souls, sparing no pains and declining no fatigue to be useful to perishing sinners; and his labour was not in vain in the Lord.

He studied his sermons with uncommon diligence and application, often addressing the throne of grace

for divine counsel and instruction, that he might know the truth as it is in Jesus, feel its efficacy on his own soul, and have proper matter to lay before his hearers, suited to their respective cases; and accompanied all with fervent prayers, that his ministrations might be blessed of God, who alone giveth increase. He seldom began a sermon without prefixing to it some Latin motto adapted to the subject, and a short but devout aspiration for assistance; such as, *Adjuvet Deus, Deo Duce, Favente Numine, Auspicante Deo O. M.* "Lord, assist; O God, give light," &c. &c. He would be often lamenting the hardness and impenitency of sinners under the gospel-dispensation, and the little success his labours had among his people; and would devoutly rejoice in spirit, and give glory to God, when any poor sinner was awakened to a thorough sense of religion.

His chief pulpit-theme was Christ and him crucified, and the great truths relating to his person, natures, offices, undertaking, &c. which he endeavoured to illustrate and explain in an easy and intelligible manner, level to the capacities of the meanest of his people. He did not entertain them, as some preachers do, with abstract reasonings on philosophical points, or with dry harangues of mere morality; well knowing that the preaching of Christ is only calculated for saving the souls of men, and that philosophical and merely moral discourses are no ingredient in *the ministration of the Spirit*, nor any of the *weapons of the gospel warfare*, which *are mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations [reasonings], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.* He preached the doctrine of free grace, being the doctrine according to godliness; and at the same time warmly pressed holiness of heart and life. No minister more earnestly inculcated the doctrines of morality upon gospel-principles than he; no man was ever more jealous of the interests of holi-



ness. His constant direction was, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*; and he affirmed constantly, *That they which have believed in God, should be careful to maintain good works; these things being good and profitable unto men.*

He generally wrote his sermons full as he delivered them, but was sometimes, through the violence of the painful distempers under which he laboured, disabled from writing. But it was observed, that on such occasions his blessed Master laid suitable furniture to his hand, and favoured him with uncommon assistances; so that he would sometimes say, "What would I not give to have such and such a sermon committed to writing, as a monument of the Lord's helping in time of need!"

It appears from a number of Latin sentences, and other pious remarks extracted from books, scattered through his manuscript volumes, or written on the inside of the boards of them, that Christ was very precious to his soul, and that he loved to read and write of his dear Redeemer.

In short, it may be safely affirmed of Mr IRVINE, that he was an eminent Christian, a faithful and laborious servant of Christ, had the salvation of souls much at heart, and endeavoured to the utmost of his power to promote the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom as far as his influence could reach. At the same time he was modest, humble, self-denied, deeply affected with a sense of his own imperfections, and had the most humiliating views of his own unworthiness. And there can be no doubt, but that he has long ago entered into the joy of his exalted Master, where he will shine as the stars for ever and ever.

This good man lived above the world, having his heart and affections set on heavenly things, without troubling himself with temporal affairs, which he entrusted mostly to his pious spouse. Though his stipend in both congregations was very small, yet he was extremely charitable to the poor, and perhaps

performed more acts of charity than his circumstances could well bear.

He was very alert and conscientious as to admitting people to the Lord's table, looking on that almost promiscuous admission which too much prevails in many places, as a real act of unfaithfulness and cruelty to the souls of men, as a scandal to religion, and a standing ground of the Lord's controversy with this church and land.

He was zealously attached to the Protestant succession in the illustrious house of Hanover, and could not, with silence, behold the daring appearances made for a Popish pretender in the year 1715. This drew upon him the resentment of the Jacobite party; so that he not only lost part of his effects, but was obliged to fly from his house and congregation, and shelter himself at Edinburgh, till God was pleased to crush that unprovoked and unhallowed attempt.

Mr IRVINE married Mrs BETHIA FORBES, a well-accomplished and religious gentlewoman, who was related to some good families in the kingdom, and preferred this good man to some more opulent matches in her offer. At his death he left her a disconsolate widow, with five young children, four of whom are now alive, three of them daughters, for whose benefit this publication is designed. He had little to bequeath for their support, but his household furniture and books; of which last, however, they reaped little benefit, through fraudulent contrivances unnecessary here to be mentioned. At this time too most of his manuscripts were imbezzled, and could never be recovered.

After her husband's death, Mrs IRVINE came to Edinburgh, for the education of her children, where she was exposed to many straits and difficulties. Her house was for many years a rendezvous for the godly of both sexes, and seldom a day passed without some religious society being held in it: so that it might justly be called a house of prayer. This good woman lived



## P R E E A C E.

till March 1770, when she died, in the 80th year of her age, a rare example of piety and resignation to the sovereign will of providence under a variety of heavy afflictions.

Some of Mr IRVINE's sermons were shewn to several ministers and Christians during the life of his widow, who signified their approbation of them, and thought they merited a public view. But the difficulty of getting a proper hand to transcribe and prepare them for the press, and her inability to bear the expence of it, the design could not be accomplished in her time, though she often expressed her desire to read some of those sermons she had heard with so much pleasure when delivered.

After the good old woman's death, her daughters were equally fond of the project; but the same difficulties subsisted. At length the present editor having perused some of the sermons with pleasure, and deeply affected with the distressed condition of the daughters, without fee or reward, or the prospect of any, readily undertook the work: on which Providence has so far smiled, that it is now happily brought to a conclusion.

The sermons are selected from several volumes, all in the author's hand-writing. In preparing them for the press, the Editor chose to let them go abroad in their native simplicity, as truth is to the saints ever sweetest in her plain dress, and requires no artificial decorations to set off her beauty. Oratorical embellishments would be ridiculous, and a pious soul would loath them, in a work calculated for the meridian of the humble Christian and the sincere follower of Jesus. No corrections or additions have been made, but what the sense and scope of the matter required. Scripture-passages have been extended where necessary; some periods have been lengthened, and others shortened. The divisions and subdivisions of heads and particulars have been carefully attended to, and properly distinguished. And however these sermons may be relished by those of a critical taste, the Editor can safely say,

they have cost him not a little time and trouble. But if they shall prove useful to saints or sinners, he will think his labour well bestowed.

A few of the transcribed sermons were put into the hands of some ministers and preachers, in order to give their opinion of them; who, after perusal, declared their approbation of the discourses as sound and orthodox, and their opinion of their being useful to many. And indeed, as one said of the works of a learned clergyman, he must either be a very good man or a very bad man who may not profit by these discourses.

The Editor takes the liberty of returning thanks, in the name of the author's daughters, to those who have encouraged the undertaking, and particularly to some gentlemen and ladies who have been very active in procuring subscriptions; and he hopes they will find themselves amply recompensed for this instance of their benevolence to the distressed, by the sacred advantage and pleasure which they and their families will receive in the perusal of these discourses; in which there is a vein of solid and rational piety, warm devotion, and a tender concern for the best interests of mankind. And he would fain hope, that benevolent and humane Christians who have not subscribed, and can spare a few shillings for a truly-charitable purpose, will, on hearing of the design of this publication, buy copies of the book, in order to assist the indigent; as on the sale of the whole impression the design is suspended.

It will be a real pleasure to all concerned, to hear that these discourses have an extensive spread, and are found useful for promoting the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls. And that they may, through the divine blessing, reach these salutary and important purposes, is the hearty desire of

Edinburgh, Nov. 21.

1772.

THE EDITOR.

† b 2



*Just published, and sold by W. GRAY, front of the Exchange,  
W. DARLING, Bridge-Street, and J. REID, Printer, Bailie  
Fyfe's close, Edinburgh,*

*Price 9 s. in boards,*

Dedicated to the Ministers of the Church of Scotland,

T H E  
O E C O N O M Y  
O F T H E  
C O V E N A N T S  
B E T W E E N  
G O D A N D M A N.  
C O M P R E H E N D I N G  
A C O M P L E T E B O D Y O F D I V I N I T Y.

By HERMAN WITSIUS, D.D.  
Late PROFESSOR of DIVINITY at LEYDEN.

Translated from the Latin original, and recommended to the serious perusal of all Christians, by sundry eminent divines.—This book consists of three large volumes Octavo, and is printed with a large elegant type on a good paper. It was never before printed in Scotland.

28 SE60

# C O N T E N T S.

## D I S C O U R S E I.

The Coming of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, proved.

JOHN i. 11.

*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* I

## D I S C O U R S E II.

Christ an all-sufficient Saviour to all who come unto God by him, and his Intercession for them opened up and applied.

HEBREWS vii. 25.

*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* 26

## D I S C O U R S E III.

The Nature, Ends, Manner, and Reasons of Christ's Sufferings unfolded.

I PETER iii. 8.

*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.* 114

## D I S C O U R S E IV.

Christ precious unto Believers.

I PETER ii. 7.

*Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.* 153

## D I S C O U R S E V.

The Nature and Excellency of Christ's Testament.



## xiv CONTENTS.

MARK xiv. 24.

*And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.* 189

### DISCOURSE VI.

Room for Sinners in Christ.

LUKE xiv. 22.

— *And yet there is room.* 233

### DISCOURSE VII.

The slain Lamb in the midst of the Throne.

REVELATION v. 6.

*And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.* 248

### DISCOURSE VIII.

The Song of Moses and the Lamb.

REVELATION xv. 2. 3.

*And I saw as it were a sea of glass, mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.* 267

### DISCOURSE IX.

To eat of the Tree of Life the Privilege of the spiritual Overcomer.

C O N T E N T S.      xv

REVELATION ii. 7.

*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*      291

D I S C O U R S E    X.

The rich Inheritance of the spiritual Overcomer.

REVELATION xxi. 7.

*He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*      310

D I S C O U R S E    XI.

The Joy resulting from Faith.

LUKE xix. 6.

*And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.*      325

D I S C O U R S E    XII.

The Duty of rejoicing in the Lord always, explained and enforced.

PHILIPPIANS iv. 4.

*Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*      345

D I S C O U R S E    XIII.

The Duty of Believers to bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for all the spiritual Blessings conferred on them in Christ, opened up and applied.

EPHESIANS i. 3.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*      307



**CONTENTS.**

**DISCOURSE XIV.**

**The Delight which God hath in his People  
illustrated.**

102

**PSALM cxlvii. 11.**

*The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in  
those that hope in his mercy.*

401

**DISCOURSE XV.**

**The Solemnity of Christ's second Coming.**

**REVELATION i. 7.**

*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see  
him, and they also which pierced him: and all kin-  
dreds of the earth shall wail because of him.*

422

28 SEGO

# DISCOURSE I.

The Coming of JESUS CHRIST, the promised  
MESSIAH, proved.

JOHN i. ii.

*He came unto his own, and his own received him not\*.*

**H**OW soon this world was enlightened with the glorious and irradiating rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and blessed with the joyful tidings of the miraculous birth and glorious undertaking of our blessed Redeemer, so soon did the grand enemy of souls begin to bestir himself to oppose the designs of his grace in the gospel; with serpentine subtilty endeavouring to overthrow the mediatorial scheme, partly by raising cruel and bloody persecutions against the innocent Lamb of God, even in his infancy, and against his disciples and followers; and partly by fomenting and spreading a flood of pernicious and damnable heresies, wherewith the church of Christ, while yet in her infancy and swaddling-cloaths, was sadly infested.

Among the rest of that cursed crew of infamous heretics is deservedly reckoned the impudent Cerinthus, who, among his other errors, had the hellish effrontery to deny the Divinity of the Son of God, falsely alleging him to have been *ὑψίλος ἄνθρωπος*, an exalted man †.

To refute this arch-heretic, this eagle-eyed apostle, who soared aloft above all his predecessors in the go-

\* This sermon was preached in the author's younger years, when minister at Lunan.

† The tenets held by this heretic were a rhapsody of blasphemy and nonsense. A specimen of them may be seen in Dr. Mosheim's church-history, vol. i. p. 117. 8vo edit.



2 • *Jesus Christ the promised Messiah.* Disc. 1.

spel-history, does chiefly write this excellent piece of facted scripture, wherein he clearly and beyond all exception manifests and asserts the divine nature and supreme Godhead of our blessed Saviour, so fundamental an article of the Christian faith.

In the first verse of this chapter, the evangelist lays down the confirmation of this important truth, that the Lord Jesus Christ was no less God than man: *In the beginning, says he, was the Word, and the Word was God.* By *the Word* he means the second person of the ever-glorious Trinity, who was incarnate for the salvation of mankind sinners. He calls him, ver. 9. *the light.* *That, says he, was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* In ver. 10. he tells us how the world was made by him, and yet the world knew him not. The things here declared were mysteries that had been kept hid for ages, and such as God for four thousand years together, by all the wise methods of his providence, had been preparing the world for, before it could be ripe and disposed for receiving them. And therefore a most excellent subject this must needs have been for this beloved disciple to impart to sinners; who, having so long lain in the bosom of Truth itself, received all things from that great original, by more intimate and immediate communications, than any of the other apostles. In a word, he was as it were of his divine Master's cabinet-council; no wonder then if he spake oracles.

Time will not permit me now to vindicate the preceding verses from the perverse interpretations of that false pretender to reason, and real subverter of all religion, Socinus, who, in the exposition of this chapter, and some part of the 8th, hath laid the foundation of that great Babel of blasphemies, with which he afterwards so much pestered the Christian church. Neither do we think it directly requisite to the prosecution of these words, nor so proper for answering my design in chusing this excellent scripture-text, which is to en-

Disc. 1. *Jesus Christ the promised Messiah.* 3

deavour to prove, that our exalted Redeemer, who was promised by the Father, and prophesied of by the holy prophets, is actually come. *He came unto his own.* In which words we have,

1. The glorious person who came, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, the eminent seed of the woman\*, promised to bruise the serpent's head, the desire of all nations\*.

2. The persons to whom he came, here expressed by that endearing term, *his own.* This in a strict sense denotes the Jews, his own countrymen, whom he had chosen for his peculiar people, and distinguished by many advantages from the nations of the world. But in a more extensive sense, it is to be understood of the whole collective body of the elect, both Jews and Gentiles. Thus the apostle Peter says, Acts x. 34. 35. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." And says the apostle Paul, Rom. iii. 29. "Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also."

3. The bad entertainment which the Prince of Life met with from those to whom he was sent. It might have been expected, that this enriching blessing should have been unanimously and cordially embraced by all, both Jews and Gentiles; not only received into their houses, but into their hearts. Yet behold it was otherwise, *They received him not.* They, that is, the most part of them, received him not, did not believe in him, did not credit his doctrine, nor that he was the Saviour of sinners. Thus *receiving* of Christ is explained, in the following verse, by *believing* in him.

The only doctrine I shall observe from the words is the following, viz.

Doct. *Our glorious Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

\* The author had preached a series of sermons on Gen. iii. 15. and Hag. ii. 7. to which he here refers, before this discourse on the truth of Christ's coming. The former are imperfect, and the latter lost.



4 *Jesus Christ the promised Messiah.* Disc. 1.

*the promised Messiah, is actually come into this world, clothed with indisputable credentials of his divine original and mission.*

In discoursing from this doctrine, I shall,

I. Prove, that Christ, who was graciously promised by the Father, and whose coming was foretold by the prophets of old, is actually come.

II. Shew whence he came.

III. Why, or for what end, he came into this world.

IV. Lastly, Make application.

I. I am to prove, that Christ, who was graciously promised by the Father, and whose coming was foretold by the ancient prophets, is actually come. I hope I need not enlarge much upon this point in a congregation of Christians; yet I apprehend it will not be improper to speak something to this comfortable article of the Christian faith.

It is a matter of such undoubted truth and certainty in the sacred oracles, that he that runs may read it. The manifestation of Christ in the flesh was no phantasm or delusion, but a most evident and palpable fact: 1 John i. 1. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life." A truth so certain, that the asserters of it appealed to the very enemies of Christianity for the certainty thereof, Acts ii. 22. Yea, not only the sacred, but the profane writers bear witness to it; not only the evangelists and apostles, but the writers of those times, both Roman and Jewish, as Sueton, Tacitus, Pliny the younger, and Josephus the Jewish historian, do acknowledge it.

It is admirable to observe, that the heavens concurred with great harmony to manifest the eternal Word to the world. At the birth of our Saviour they spoke aloud, and made use of a new star as of a tongue to declare the living God; and this apparition became so famous, that even infidels had authentic testimonies

of it. But I shall pass from the voice of nature to voices divine.

What is more admirable than the universal consent of prophecies? We find indeed prophets separated from one another by the distance of many hundred years, different in age, humour, and condition, style and invention, order and connection, who could neither see one another, nor agree together in any kind, as were David, Isaiah, and Daniel; yet all of them, without mutual knowledge, laboured in writing the history of the great Saviour of the world. One spoke of his birth, another of his life; one of his doctrine, another of his manners; one of his miracles; another of his death; and some of his victories and triumphs. So that when we take pains to collect all these scattered pieces of sacred history, we find them all measured with such proportion, that we may in faith affirm and conclude, that this is nothing else but the glorious work of the eternal Spirit of God.

But now we come more particularly to prove the point in hand; and, by divine assistance, we shall let you see that Jesus Christ came exactly agreeable to the promises, types, and predictions revealed to the ancient fathers, even to the most minute circumstances thereof. This is a great truth for our faith to be established in. Let us therefore direct our eyes both to the promises and performances of the all-wise God, with respect to the coming of his beloved Son, our Saviour; and we will find, that what was foretold concerning him was exactly fulfilled. We shall begin,

*First*, With his person and qualifications; and this as it was foretold, so it was fulfilled.

1. His original was said to be unsearchable and from everlasting, Micah v. 2. And so he affirmed himself to be, Rev. i. 11. *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.* John viii. 58. *Before Abraham was, I am.*

2. His natures united in one person were plainly foretold, Zech. xiii. 7. *The man my fellow;* and such an one he was; *ever all God-blessed for ever*, Rom. ix. 5.



6 *Jesus Christ the promised Messiah. Disc. 1.*

3. His immaculate purity and holiness was foretold, Dan. ix. 24. *to anoint the most holy.* Some render it the great saint, the Prince of saints. And such a one he was indeed, when he lived in this world. *Which of you convinceth me of sin?* said he, John viii. 46.

4. His offices were foretold. (1.) His prophetic office, Deut. xviii. 15. *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, like unto me;* which was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, John i. 48. *Before that Philip called thee, says he to Nathanael, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.* (2.) His priestly office was foretold and exactly fulfilled; foretold, Psal. cx. 4. *Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek:* fulfilled, Heb. ix. 14. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (3.) His kingly office was foretold, Micah v. 2.—*Out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel.* Psal. ii. 6. *I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.* In him it was fulfilled, his enemies being judges, Matth. xxvii. 37. *They set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

Secondly, His birth, and that both as to the time and place, together with the manner thereof, was foretold to the fathers; and in exact agreement thereto Christ came.

1. The time was prefixed more generally in Jacob's dying address to his children, who prophesied long before all prophets, that the Messiah, whom he styles *Shiloh*, should come when the sceptre of Israel should be taken out of the hands of Judah's race; which was exactly fulfilled in the time of Herod the Idu-mean, who put the true heirs of the royal line to death, to satisfy his cruel ambition, and with a design to cut off the Messiah. More particularly, the time of Christ's birth was revealed to Daniel, chap. ix. 26. who prophesied, that, after the edict of Darius grant-

Disc. 1. *Jesus Christ the promised Messiah.* 7

ed for rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem, there should be seventy weeks to the birth of Christ; which was found, by the exactest calculation of the best historians, to answer to the time of Christ's birth. This proved so full and convincing a proof of the fact, that Porphyry, that great enemy of Christianity, had no other way to evade the force of it, but saying that the prophecy was devised after the event. But this the Jews (who are as bitter enemies to Christ as himself) will by no means allow to be true. And, lastly, the time of his birth was exactly pointed at in Haggai's prophecy, chap. ii. 7. 9. compared with Mal. iii. 1. He must come while the second temple stood. At which time there was a general expectation of his coming, John i. 19. And at that very time he came, as you may see from Luke ii. 38.

2. The place of his birth was foretold to be Bethlehem-Ephratah, Micah v. 2.; and so it was, Matth. ii. 5. 6. He was to be brought up in Nazareth, Zech. vi. 12. *Behold the man whose name is the branch.* The word is *Netzer*; whence comes *Nazarite*. It was, moreover, prophesied of him, that he should be called a *Nazarene*; and at Nazareth was he brought up, Matth. ii. 23.

3. His parent was to be a virgin, Is. vii. 14. *Behold, (says the evangelical prophet), a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* This was punctually fulfilled, Matth. i. 20. 21. 22. 23. being born of Mary while yet a virgin, though espoused to Joseph. O how wonderful was this birth! Surely, if it be duly considered, it cannot fail to be matter of astonishment to us. Cyprian, one of the ancient fathers of the Christian church, in a mighty rapture cries out, *Miror Deum in incunabulis, miror Omnipotentem in utero virginis, miror quomodo Verbo Dei adbaserit caro*: "God in a cradle, the Almighty in the womb of a virgin, and the union of flesh with the Word of God, are matter of wonder to me." Nay, a greater than Cyprian, even the great apostle of the



Gentiles, who was caught up into the third heavens, and learned the mysteries of the gospel from the exalted Redeemer himself, is forced to say with wonder, 1 Tim. iii. 16. *Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh.* The very angels, those pure and intelligent spirits, stoop down and desire to pry into this mystery, though they cannot fathom it, 1 Pet. i. 12.

O, what a strange thing was it, that he who fills heaven and earth with immense glory, was pleased as it were to confine himself for a time in the narrow cell of a virgin's womb, and of one none of the richest or greatest neither! for though she was a person of great piety, yet so straitened were her circumstances, that she was not able to give that which was required for sacrifices from persons in her situation; which you may see by comparing Lev. xii. 8. with Luke ii. 24.

O admire redeeming love! Christ thus humbled himself, that he might exalt us.

4. The stock or tribe whence our Lord should descend was foretold to be Judah, Gen. xlix. 10.; and it is evident, says the apostle, that our Lord sprang out of Judah, Heb. vii. 14.

5. His harbinger, or forerunner, was foretold, Mal. iv. 5. 6. and fulfilled in John the Baptist, Luke i. 16. 17.

6. The obscurity and meanness of his birth was predicted, Is. liii. 2. Zech. ix. 9. to which the event answered, Luke ii. 12.

*Thirdly*, As his person and birth were foretold, so also were his doctrine and miracles, as Is. lxi. 1. 2. and xxxv. 4. 5. the accomplishment whereof in Christ is evident from the history of all the evangelists, as Luke iv. 18. &c.

*Fourthly*, His being betrayed, and the price paid to the traitor, were exactly foretold, Zech. xi. 12. 13. Compare Matth. xvi. 14. 15. & xxvii. 3.—8.

*Fifthly*, His death for poor sinners was foretold by the prophets, Dan. ix. 26. *The Messiah shall be cut off,*

but not for himself. If. liii. 5. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. And so he was, John xi. 50. The very kind and manner of his death was prefigured by the brazen serpent, his type, and answered in his death upon the cross, John iii. 14.

*Sixthly*, His burial in the tomb of a rich man was foretold, If. liii. 9. and accomplished most exactly, Matth. xxvii. 59. 60.

*Seventhly*, His resurrection from the dead was typified in Jonah, and fulfilled in Christ's abode three days and three nights in the grave, Matth. xii. 39. Acts x. 40. 41.

*Eighthly*, The wonderful spreading of the gospel in the world, even to the isles of the Gentiles, was prophesied of, Psal. ii. 8. If. xlix. 6. To the truth whereof we are not only the witnesses, but the happy instances and examples of it. Now it is manifest, that all things are fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning him, Luke xxiv. 44.

II. I come now to shew whence Christ came.

1. He came from the throne of his glory. O what an astonishing descent was this; that he should come down from the throne of glory to a manger; from a company of angels; to be crucified between thieves; from the palace of heaven into a world that would not receive him, but thrust him out among beasts; from a throne to a cross; from the heights of dignity to the extremity of shame and dishonour! He leaped, saith Gregory, from heaven into the womb, from that into the manger, from that to the cross, and from thence into the grave. O wonderful condescension! unexampled humility!

2. He came from the court of angels. The Lord Jesus Christ was and is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. He made the angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. He was



continually attended, as the Royal Sovereign, by this glorious retinue of blessed angels; yet he left his royal court for a time, to visit the sons of men. O what abasement was here, that he should come from the company of cherubim and seraphim, to be contemned by the basest of men, and treated as a worm, and no man!

3. He came from the bosom of his Father, the richest place in heaven, that seat of ineffable pleasure and delight; from the incomprehensible surpassing glories of the Godhead. The heaven of heavens was his habitation, and legions of cherubim and seraphim were his humble and constant attendants; yet he left all these, to tabernacle among men sprung of dust, and save those who had rebelled against him. The Lord Jesus was and is the Son of God's delight, his darling, the beloved of his soul, Matth. iii. 17. Christ is he that lies in the bosom of his Father, and he alone is able to reveal the secrets of the Lord to the world, John i. 18. *The only begotten Son of God, he hath declared him.* Now, that the Lord Jesus should come from the bosom of God to the belly of hell, that he should leave the glory of heaven for the torments of the infernal pit, and all for our sakes, wicked sinners and abandoned rebels; what a strange wonder of love was this! Wonder at it, O angels! be astonished, O ye heavens! and thou, O earth, express thy surprise! Break forth into ecstasies of admiration, O ye men, for whose sake the Son of God divested himself of his glory, and took on him the likeness of sinful flesh! And ye spirits of just men made perfect, express your wonder with never-ceasing songs of praise on your golden harps. Let us all wonder at this unparalleled abasement of the great God our Saviour, who is now exalted far above all heavens.

III. Our next business is to shew why, or for what end Christ, came into our world.

In general, he came to manifest the glory of his

Father, and to recover what man had lost, or to restore that which he took not away. More particularly,

1. He came to fulfil the ancient promises, prophecies, and predictions made in the Old Testament concerning him. It was, immediately after the entrance of sin into the world, promised by him that cannot lie, that *the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*, Gen. iii. 15. And this he did effectually on his cross. Old Jacob on his deathbed uttered a memorable prophecy concerning him, Gen. xlix. 10. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.* That this was a prophecy concerning our glorious Redeemer, is not controverted. It is agreed upon by the ancient rabbies of the Jews, and the Jerusalem Targum, that by *Shiloh* is meant Messiah, the Christ. Likewise in Bereshith Rabba, upon the word *Shiloh*, it is said, "This is the Christ." Yea, even a Balaam prophesied concerning him, as if he had spoken from the very mouth of Jacob, Numb. xxiv. 16. 17. "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." Now, Christ came to fulfil these prophecies, and they were exactly accomplished in him, as you have heard.

2. He came, that he might answer and put an end to all the typical sacrifices that prefigured him. All these temporary shadows and ceremonies did fly away and vanish, when Christ the substance came. He is our true passover who was sacrificed for us; that one sacrifice that was once offered up for all them that are sanctified, Heb. x. 14.

3. He came to vanquish all his own and his people's enemies, to bind the strong man, and to cast him and his goods out of his temple. He came to proclaim liberty to captive sinners, to let the prisoners go free that were appointed unto death. In a word,



4. He came to seek and to save lost sinners. And, first, he came to seek; that is one end of his coming, Luke xix. 10. He promises this to his Father and elect, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. *I will seek that which was lost.* He seeks, his ministers seek, his Spirit seeks, and conscience is set on the work to seek. And who is it, think you, that he came to seek? It is us lost sinners. *All we like sheep have gone astray*; and he, that great and good Shepherd of the flock, came to seek us: Luke xv. you may read there of the lost sheep, the lost goat, and the lost son; and who were these but the lost sinners of the human race? ver. 32. Again, he came to save. The apostle Paul sets to his seal to this, 1 Tim. i. 15. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom (says he) I am chief.* He puts in for one of them, as knowing that Christ came not call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Did not his alluring calls and invitations declare this convincingly to his hearers, and are they not on sacred record left to us for our encouragement and excitement to apply to him for recovery from the fearful ruins of the fall, and for instatement in the friendship and favour of God? If our hearts be not as hard as the adamant, and a piece of the nether millstone, this love of God our Saviour should deeply affect us, and make them glow with love to this gracious Redeemer, who came to save his people from their sins, and deliver them from the wrath to come.

I proceed now to the application of this subject.

Is it so that Christ is come? Then,

1. This serves to inform us, in opposition to all those blasphemous heretics that went before, were contemporary with, or came after our blessed Saviour, that he had an existence before all time, according to that, Heb. xiii. 8. *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*

2. It serves to inform us also of the truth of all

God's gracious promises. He can as soon deny himself, and cease to be God, as he can be the father of an untruth. Let us all then say, (whatever our corruptions may suggest, and Satan may tempt us to, in order to make us distrust the word of God, which is for ever settled in heaven), *Let God be true, and every man a liar*: for his promises are all yea and amen to those that trust in him: and we may argue as the apostle does, Rom. viii. 32. from the greater to the less, *He that gave us Christ, and did not spare him, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

3. It informs us of the transcendently-great love of God in sending of his Son: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. It likewise informs us of the matchless love of our glorious Redeemer, in that he came to seek and save lost sinners. This love of Christ, says the apostle, Eph. iii. 19. *passes knowledge*. And says the beloved disciple, Rev. i. 5. 6. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, — to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." "Greater love" (says Christ) "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," John xv. 13. And yet says the apostle, *Christ did for the ungodly*. O admire this love! let it be the continual subject of your delightful meditation.

*Use II.* of trial. Search and examine yourselves, whether ye be come to Christ or not. For your assistance herein, I will give you the following marks of those who have undoubtedly come to Christ.

1. Those who have come to Christ, are sorry that they were so long in coming. They know when they were without Christ in the world; they remember when Christ strove with them in his word by his Spirit, and they resisted his calls and invitations, as others do: but now being by his almighty power drawn to him, they know by experience what they



lost by living without him; they are sensible how they provoked him, and wonder that ever he cast an eye of pity on them, and determined them by his efficacious grace to embrace him as their Saviour. And their so long refusing his overtures of mercy is their grief, their piercing sorrow; and this their unkindness to their beneficent friends draws tears from their eyes, and sighs from their hearts. "O," says the soul, "what a wretched rebel was I, who, when Christ stretched out his hands all the day, refused; when he called and entreated, I did not answer; when he drew, I resisted! O what love, what indulgence was this! and what wretched unkindness was mine!"

This melts the soul into sorrow. If this be your temper, then ye may conclude that ye have come to Christ.

2. They are acquainted with the way to Christ. Those that have now walked in that way, know it by experience. They have clear and distinct discoveries of the multitude and hainousness of their sins; they have been apprehensive of the wrath of God due to them for their sins, and their unworthiness of any spiritual favour; they have felt their hearts drawn out in ardent desires after Christ, so as their souls could say of him, as Rachel did of children, *Give us Christ, or we will die*; and thereupon have been drawn to consent to take Christ upon his own terms, to part with all that the Lord requires, to submit to all he enjoins, undergo all that he shall please to inflict, so as they may but enjoy Christ: they care not what they want, so they may have him; nor what they lose, so they may gain him. This is the way whereby the Lord brings sinners to Christ. If ye know this way by experience, ye are come to Christ indeed; but if ye are strangers to it, ye are not yet come.

3. They have a high esteem of him. While the soul is afar off, it is apt to say, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* it sees no such comeliness and beauty in him, as that he should be desired. But when a person is come to Christ, he sees such beauty

and excellency in him as darkens all outward excellencies, and makes them seem dross and dung compared with Christ, who is more glorious and excellent than all mountains of prey: Phillip. iii. 8. "Yea, "doubtless," says Paul, "and I count all things but "loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ "Jesus my Lord." Paul did not count them worthy to have place in his thoughts, nor room in that heart which had entertained Christ. Now the soul wonders at its former blindness, that it could see so little excellency in Christ, when there is (as now he sees) infinitely so much. Now he tastes that the Lord is gracious. He had heard of him before but by the hearing of the ear, and his apprehensions were suitable, such as a blind man has of the sun, or one that hears a discourse in commendation of what he never saw. But now his eye sees him, and his eye affects his heart, and his heart is filled with admiration of him, as the chief of ten thousands, and altogether lovely; as worthy of all his love and highest regard. If his heart could be turned into love, Christ would be the sole object thereof. Thus, if ye value and esteem Christ above all persons and things, ye have certainly come to him; if not, ye are still far from him.

4. They are in a new condition. He that comes to Christ, comes as it were into a new world. Old things are passed away; and behold, all things are become new. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*; and can say, with Augustine, *Ego non sum ego*; "I am not "the man I was before."

5. They walk with Christ. This is the end of their coming to him. Formerly they had fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; but now their fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ. Now they know, with Enoch, what it is to walk with God, and please him, in a course of holy obedience to him, and fellowship with him.

6. They are at a great distance from sin and the world. For coming to Christ necessarily supposes a de-



parting from sin and the world, and embracing Christ as the soul's portion.

7. They have renounced their own righteousness, and account it but filthy rags; and, above all things, seek to be found in Christ, not having their own righteousness, but that of Christ alone; and with joy claim interest in him as the Lord their righteousness, Phil. iii. 9.

*Use III.* Is it so that Christ is come? Then this serves for exhortation to all, especially the hearers of the gospel, to receive and entertain this matchless person, and to come to him, by believing in his name, for salvation. Has he come to you? and will you not be prevailed on to come to him? Here I would adventure to speak to you who have perhaps all your days stood out against Christ, and have refused him access and entertainment.

I. O will you consider with me some motives and inducements which I am warranted and authorised to propound to you, which through the concurrence of grace may be effectual to make you willing to receive him. And these shall be drawn from the necessity, the advantages, the equity of receiving him and coming to him, and the danger of not doing so.

1<sup>st</sup>, Consider what necessity there is of coming to Christ. You cannot look upon any thing, but, if duly weighed, will convince you of this necessity. Look upon heaven or hell, upon this world or the world to come, upon present enjoyments or future hopes, upon mercy or justice, upon the word of God or his works; look upon what you will, you may see an absolute necessity to make haste to Christ. Look upon heaven, it is shut up against you; upon hell, it is set open to swallow you up, till ye come to him that has the key of David, who can open and none can shut, and who can shut and none can open. Look upon this world, there is nothing in it that can afford you comfort; upon the world to come, there is nothing there to give you ease, nothing but endless torments. Here

is nothing but a world of vexations and vanities, hereafter nothing but a world of eternal miseries, till you come to Christ, who is all both here and hereafter. Look upon present enjoyments, they are all cursed; upon future hopes, and they are all blasted, till you come to Christ, by whom the sinner's curse is removed, and his hope revived. Look upon mercy, it cannot save you; upon justice, it is engaged against you, till you come to Christ, in whom mercy is magnified and justice satisfied. Look upon the word, it does nothing but threaten you; upon God's works, they are ready as executioners to obey his commands against you, till you come to Christ, who makes all the words of God as sweet expressions of love, as a promise, and all the works of God acts of mercy. But more particularly, till you come to Christ,

2. You are under the power of Satan. You are his children, his vassals, and his works you will do. Till ye believe in Christ, ye belong really to Satan, however in words ye may disclaim him. He that is not with is against him, joins with his mortal enemy, fights under Satan's colours against Christ and his interest, even when he thinks he does Christ service. So did Paul before his conversion.

Till you come to Christ, you are under the power of darkness, you are one of Satan's kingdom: he governs you, works in you, tyrannizes over you: you are in more grievous bondage to him than the Israelites were under Pharaoh: for it is soul-slavery, a bondage that you are not sensible of, that you will not believe, though the Lord in scripture avers it. Hence coming to Christ (which I am pressing you to) is described by a *turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*, Acts xxvi. 18.

3. Ye are under the guilt of sin, or an obligation to suffer the penalty of the broken covenant of works. You have done nothing but sinned since ye came into the world: every one of your thoughts, words, and actions, have been sins against God. And of all those



numberless millions of sins ye have been guilty of, not one of them is pardoned till ye come to Christ, who in the day of believing blots out sin, and forgives all trespasses. There is as much guilt lying upon every one of your souls as is sufficient to sink a soul into hell; and not the weight of one dram can be removed till ye close with Christ by faith. O, what need is there then to come to Christ, who is come to you, that ye may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, through faith which is in him?

4. Ye are under the wrath of God. He is your enemy, the Lord of hosts is his name. His anger is kindled against you; he is angry with the wicked every day; his indignation burns like fire, and will scorch you here and burn you hereafter, unless you come to Christ to quench it by his blood. It is he only that has slain the enmity, it is he only that has wrought deliverance from the wrath to come. O then fly out of this horrible condition, as you would fly from everlasting burnings. Make haste to Zoar; look not back till ye come to the mountains, lest you perish by fire from heaven, lest the wrath of God consume you. Your sins have kindled this fire; it burns so as none can extinguish it but Christ only. O look upon this warning as that message from heaven to Lot's family. Your natural condition is as Sodom: if you slight this warning, as Lot's sons-in-law did, Gen. xix. 14. you will certainly like them be consumed in the iniquity of that state. God has prepared Christ a Zoar for the safety of his chosen ones. And now hear the Lord speaking by me, as he spoke to Lot, ver. 17. Escape, poor sinner, for thy life; look not behind thee; neither stay thou in this condition; escape to the mountain, flee to Christ, to his blood and righteousness, lest thou be consumed in the avenging fire of wrath.

5. Ye are under the curse: For it is written, "Cur-  
sed is every one that continueth not in all things  
which are written in the book of the law to do

“ them,” Gal. iii. 10. “ Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.” Thus by the breach of the covenant of works, ye are under the curse of the law. All its curses are levelled against you, and will fall upon you with redoubled vengeance, till you come Christ, who was made under the law, bore the curse of it, in the room of sinners, and purchased deliverance from it for them. O, make haste out of this cursed and dangerous condition.

6. The justice of God is engaged to destroy you, till ye come to Christ: for justice must be satisfied before any sinner can find mercy; and none can satisfy justice but Christ; and he has done it for all that come to him and receive him.

7. Lastly, So long as the sinner stays from Christ, all his outward enjoyments are uncomfortable, bitter, and cursed to him. Nothing is sanctified to an unbeliever, Tit. i. 15. and so not blessed, but accursed. The unbelieving sinner is cursed in all his enjoyments, in the city, and in the field, in his basket and store, in his family, his work and employment, &c. Deut. xxviii. 16. &c. O then, if you are not quite without sense of your miserable condition, hasten an escape to Jesus Christ, who hath redeemed his people from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them, Gal. iii. 13.

*Secondly,* As the necessity should force you, so the sweet and precious advantages should allure you to come to Christ. For,

1. As soon as you close with him, all the aforementioned miseries will instantly vanish.

Come, O sinners, to Christ, and he will free you from the power of Satan; he will knock off the fetters wherewith the devil has loaded your souls; he will judge the prince of this world; you shall be no longer the slaves of Satan, but the sons and daughters of the Most High; and if *the Son make make you free, ye shall be free indeed,* John viii. 36.

Come to Christ, and he will free you from the guilt



of sin. He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He bore our iniquities in his own body on the tree. And there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. O come to him; for his name is Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins, Matth. i. 21.

Come to Christ, and he will make your peace with God; he will slay that enmity that is between the Lord and your souls, and intimate peace to you: that cloud of displeasure that intercepts all blessed communications from you, will be scattered, and the light of his pleasing countenance will shine on your souls.

Come to Christ, and then justice itself shall be your friend. That which stood before as a cherubim at the gate of paradise, with a flaming sword to keep you out of heaven, will then be your security, and conduct you thither; for justice has received a full compensation for all the injuries done to it by sin, in the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, and therefore must be well pleased with the sinner that comes unto God under the covert of the Mediator's blood.

Come to Christ, and then all your outward enjoyments will be comforts and blessings indeed, sweetened by the love of Christ, sanctified by his blood, and ordered by his power and wisdom to make your lives truly comfortable and useful here, and happy and glorious hereafter. Death will be no more in the pot, nor fly in the box of ointment, when once you are in Christ.

Particularly, the advantages you will gain by coming to Christ, I will reduce to these three heads.

1. Union to Christ. This is Christ's aim and design in coming to you; this he desires, and this he prays for, John xvii. 20. 21. "Neither pray I for these  
" alone, but for them also which shall believe in me  
" through their word; that they all may be one, as  
" thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they  
" also may be one in us." Here is the very spring of happiness. What greater glory can a poor worm a-

aspire to, than to become a member of Christ, united to him by an indissoluble union? Come to Christ, and you shall be admitted to such intimate union with him, and such a near relation to him, as will not only engage his tenderness and love, but his joy and delight in you, II. lxii. 5. & liv. 5.

2. Communion with him: that communion, which when perfectly enjoyed is the height of felicity in heaven, and as vouchsafed here, is the beginning of heaven on earth, a foretaste of the wine of paradise, and an earnest of the glory that is to be revealed.

3. Participation of him. Come to Christ, and ye shall partake of all that Christ can communicate, and man can receive. Satan and sin will promise much to keep you from Christ: but though they promise more than they can perform, and what they actually give will be ruinous in the issue, they cannot promise so much as Christ can give, and has purchased for poor sinners. His righteousness shall be yours, Rom. v.

13. His holiness, the ornament of his human nature, and the resemblance of his divine excellency, shall be yours, John i. 16. His peace shall be yours, John xiv. 27. his joy, John xv. 11. & xvii. 13. Their joy is the joy of the Lord. His glory shall be theirs, John xvii. 22. his kingdom, Matth. xxv. 34. his throne, Rev. iii. 21. They shall sit at his table, and reign with him for ever, 2 Tim. ii. 12. Let these considerations move you then to come to Christ by faith.

*Thirdly,* Our next motive shall be drawn from the equity and reasonableness of this duty that I am pressing you to. And methinks if there were neither necessity nor advantage in the case, yet seeing the duty is most equitable, even this should be a prevailing motive with you. The equity thereof appears in these two things.

1. You will lose nothing by coming to Christ. If you were invited to your loss, you might then refuse; there would be some excuse to make your delays and refusals more plausible. But ye can be no



losers. You may gain much, yea infinitely much; but you can lose nothing. But shall we not, by coming to Christ, lose our sins? must we not part with our dear, gainful, delightful lusts? It is true, you must part with these: but if ye did duly apprehend what sin is, and believe what the Lord in scripture speaks of it, you would never count it a loss to part with any sin whatever.

Sin is your misery, the spring of all that is reckoned miserable. Now, is it any loss to part with misery?

Sin is your fetters, your dungeon. Hence the state of sin is set out in scripture as a state of darkness and bondage. These are the chains wherein Satan keeps you captive. Now, will a poor captive think he loses any thing by leaving his prison? No more will you by coming to Christ.

Sin is your sickness, your soul's consumption. Hence the prophet expresses the sinfulness of Judah in these terms, *Is. i. 5. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.* Can a sick man lose any thing by being cured by a skilful physician? And will ye lose any thing by coming to him who has said, *I am the Lord that healeth thee?*

Sin is the wound, the plague of your souls. The more sins ye have, the more plague-sores; for sin is that which is called the plague of the heart, *1 Kings viii. 36.* Can a man be a loser by being healed of his wounds, and of a mortal plague? Come to Christ, or your sickness will be unto death.

Sin is your ugliness and deformity, that which makes your souls loathsome, *Prov. xiii. 5. A wicked man is loathsome.* Why loathsome, but because wicked? Will ye lose any thing by having your deformity removed? nay, will ye not gain by coming to Christ, who will make you like *the king's daughter, all glorious within, and your cloathing of wrought gold?*

Sin is your poison. So it is called, *Deut. xxxii. 33. Jam. iii. 8.—Full of deadly poison.* What is that, but full of sin? If the tongue, much more the heart.

This then is your condition; there is a deadly poison working in your heart, and it will certainly be your death, if you do not void it. This is all you will lose by coming to Christ; only part with your poison; be willing to vomit up that which will otherwise ruin you.

Sin is your frenzy and madness. Thus the prodigal was beside himself, when he departed from his father's house, and spent his goods with riotous living. Come to Christ, and he will restore to you a sound mind, as he did to the lunatics in the days of his flesh.

2. The equity of this duty will further appear, if you consider that he waits till you come. The great God stoops so low as to wait upon sinners, *Is. xxx. 18.* "Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you." Shall the Lord then wait for you in vain? "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart;" but comply with the call, by coming unto Christ, lest he swear in his wrath, that ye shall not enter into his rest.

*Fourthly,* The last motive shall be drawn from the danger there is in not coming to Christ.

It is murder, and, which is more, soul-murder, and, which is yet more, it is wilful murder of your souls. You know that the cry of murder is louder than that of other sins; it is a loud-crying sin: but soul-murder is more grievous, and cries louder for vengeance than that of the body, inasmuch as the soul is more precious and permanent. O sinner, here is an Italian cruelty indeed, to murder a soul, and that wilfully. What means has Christ used to reclaim you; what arguments have his messengers used to persuade you to come to Christ the promised Messiah; and some of you will not come? What remains then, but that if ye perish, the blood of your souls will be upon your own heads? None else can be accused, of none else



can it be required. I have warned you, and am therefore free of your blood, Ezek. xxxiii. 8. 9.

But more particularly, the danger will appear to be very great, if ye consider the severity of Christ's proceedings against this sin of not coming to him.

1. If ye will not come to him, he will come against you either in a severer way to reclaim you, or utterly to destroy you. This he threatens to Ephesus, Rev. ii.

5. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

So he warns the church of Laodicea, Rev. iii. 19. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent.* Wise parents that are afflicted with rebellious children, if no other means will reclaim them,

will rather send them to the house of correction, than suffer them to come to the gallows. So he treated Manasseh, as you will find in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 10. 11.

2. If you will not come to Christ, he will depart from you, and you know not how soon. Christ may wait long, but he will not wait always. If thou now refuse, perhaps Christ will depart this instant; and when he is once gone, woful is thy condition, Hos. ix. 12. *We also to them when I depart from them.* Thou mayst hear his word, but it shall never profit thee: though it be spoke to thy ear, he will not speak to thy heart; then though thou call, he will not answer thee; tho' thou seek him early, thou shalt not find him. When Jerusalem would not come to him, what was the consequence? Matth. xxiii. 37. Immediately to their *would not* he returns, *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.* Why desolate? not only because of those desolating judgments that were to follow, but because of Christ's departure, which was their forerunner; so he adds, ver. 39. *desolate, because ye shall not see me there.* Ay, that place is desolate where Christ walks not, where he is not seen and enjoyed, whatever other company frequents it. And how many places that enjoy the gospel, are

left desolate in this respect? The gospel does not convince, convert, persuade, it prevails not: why? The people have sinned away Christ's presence, and then the gospel has no success. These are some of the sad effects of Christ's departure. To-day then if you will hear his voice, come to him, lest he depart from you for ever.

3. If ye will not come to Christ now, you shall not come to him hereafter. This was the sad issue of the Jews refusal, John vii. 33. 34. *Yet a little while am I with you, says he, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.* Thus will it fare with all that will not come to Christ: he will say, "I came to you" and fought you; I came to you in my word and ordinances, by my messengers and Spirit; but you would not entertain me: sin and the world were more welcome than me: therefore I will be gone, and where I am, thither ye cannot come." O sad doom! Where wilt thou go, sinner? O come to Christ, while he calleth thee.

*Lastly,* If ye will not come to Christ, ye shall not have life, but perish for ever, John v. 40. Ye shall die in your sins, and underlie the wrath of God for ever. O then be persuaded, be entreated, for the Lord's sake, and your own souls sake, to come unto Christ, while he sits on a throne of grace, ready to receive you. Delay no longer, resist not his call; but remember, that he *who being often reproved, yet hardeneth his heart, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* The Lord persuade you.



## DISCOURSE II.

Christ an all-sufficient Saviour to all that come unto God by him, and his Intercession for them opened up and applied \*.

HEBREWS vii. 25.

*Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

**T**HE Lord Jesus Christ, and salvation through him, is the great subject of the everlasting gospel, and should be the constant and all-concerning study of the children of men: and therefore you find it so highly prized by the godly in scripture. Thus Paul says, Phil. iii. 8. "Yea, doubtless, and I count  
"all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord;—and do count them  
"but dung, that I may win Christ." 1 Cor. ii. 2,  
"I determined not to know any thing among you,  
"save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." This eminent apostle, and other expectants of heaven, have not only made this knowledge their study, but also rejoice in these glad tidings as those that find great spoil, and endeavour to bring all they can to the knowledge and love of Christ, and to build them up in this most holy faith. We find this was the apostle's great design in this epistle, wherein he gives an illustrious description of our Lord in the glorious excellencies of his natures, person, and offices. Particularly in the preceding context he shews the dignity of Christ above the Aaronical or Levitical priesthood; which he does clearly demonstrate by many forcible arguments, especially by

\* This discourse was delivered at Marytown; and the manuscript bears that it was discussed in six sermons.

affirming him to be a Priest after the order of Melchisedec, as you will find in the last verse of the preceding chapter.

In this chapter he prosecutes the argument, by drawing the parallel betwixt the order of Melchisedec and that of Aaron; and in every comparison he gives Christ the pre-eminence above these orders of Aaron's priesthood; and thereby he proves Christ to have obtained a more excellent priesthood, than those who were priests according to the order of Aaron.

Concerning this Melchisedec, there has been no small inquiry who he was. Some are of opinion, that he was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and second person of the adorable Trinity, who assumed human nature when Abraham returned from the defeat of the four kings. But this is utterly improbable: for the scripture represents him to be King of Salem, afterwards called Jerusalem, a visible and terrestrial king of that city, for by Salem that must be understood, as Psal. lxxvi. 2. Others conjecture that he was the same with Shem the son of Noah, though without probability. But whether he was so or not, or who he was, is not material. Only it is certain, that he was raised up by God to be an eminent and illustrious type of our great High Priest Jesus Christ. And though the Levitical priesthood was a clear type of that of Christ, yet this Melchisedec, who lived four hundred years before the institution of that order, was a more close and adequate type, and far superior to that. And this is here expressed, in that (1.) He was a king as well as a priest, which the Levitical priests were not. (2.) In that he was described to be *first king of righteousness*, and then *king of Salem, i. e. peace*. And here he was a most lively type of Christ, who eminently observed the same order. Christ is a King of righteousness to subdue our sins, and sanctify our natures. And he was and is the King of peace, to pacify and quiet troubled consciences, through the assurance of pardon and acceptance; for this peace he commonly bestows upon us



as the fruit of righteousness formerly communicated to us. (3) In that he was *without father and mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life.* And herein he infinitely outvies the Aaronical priesthood; for both their birth and death are plainly recorded. But it is expressly said, that *Melchisedec liveth for ever*, ver. 8. So that in this there is a nearer resemblance to Christ than they had. For Christ as God was without mother, and as man without father; as God he had no beginning of days, and as God-man he is without end of life. (4) He excels them, in that Aaron, who was the father of all the Levitical priests, did pay tithes to him in the loins of Abraham; which denotes that Abraham himself was inferior to Melchisedec, and much more his offering.

Now, Melchisedec was an eminent type of Christ in two respects, considered either in his own personal capacity, or as described in scripture. (1.) If we consider him in his personal capacity, he was king and priest, really so in himself; for he met Abraham, and received tithes from him, and blessed him; and as king he brought forth bread and wine to refresh Abraham and his men after the victory. (2.) Several things are spoken of him in scripture, not as he was really in himself, but as to what is represented to us. He is said to be without father and mother, because the scripture mentions nothing about them, but is purposely silent as to these things, that he might the better resemble the antitype Jesus Christ. He was (say some) without beginning in the new world, for he was born in the old; and without end in the old world, because he lived in the new world after the flood. There is no mention of his birth, and as little of his death; so that he doth typify the priesthood of Christ better than the Aaronical priests could do: for he is one that *abides* and continues *a priest*, ver. 3. And he lives; for the scripture speaks nothing of laying down his office. And in this he is an eminent and bright type of Christ: for he laid not down his life, so as to lose it, for he

was made after the power of an endless life, ver. 16. He hath not laid down his priesthood, for he is a priest for ever; therefore he *he hath an unchangeable priesthood*, ver 24.

The words of our text are a most native and comfortable inference drawn from all that hath been said concerning the immutability of Melchisedec's priesthood: *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, &c.*

In the words we have three things.

1. An assertion, *He is able to save to the uttermost.* Where we may notice, (1.) The extent of this salvation, and that is, *to the uttermost*, to all ends and perfections: he is able to save to all perfections, *i. e.* fully and altogether perfectly and completely. (2.) The objects of this salvation; and they are those that *come to God by him*; *i. e.* all such as are helped to seek unto God for pardoning mercy and grace, receive God in Christ as their God and Father, endeavour through grace to perform gospel-obedience to him, and tender all their services to him by faith in Jesus Christ. But more of this afterwards.

2. The proof or reason of this assertion of Christ's ability to save sinners, in these words, *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* Where we may notice, (1.) The eternity of Christ's life in heaven: *He ever liveth*; and therefore is able to save to the world's end, and to confirm them that believe in him, in an eternal happiness in glory, Rev. i. 18. *I am alive for evermore*, says he. (2.) The eternity of his priesthood: he lives for ever *to make intercession for them*; he lives for this very end to intercede and act the part of an Advocate for his people.

3. The connection between the parts of the text, in the particle *wherefore*; which holds forth the qualification of those for whom Christ makes intercession; they are those who come to God through him, and not such as either refuse to seek God, or else that come to him by their merits, and in their own names, or



leaning upon their own righteousness, or employ other advocates than Christ himself.

The text affords the three following doctrines,

DOCT. I. *Our Lord Jesus Christ is an able and all-sufficient Saviour.*

DOCT. II. *Such as expect salvation must come to God through Jesus Christ.*

DOCT. III. *The great ground and reason of Christ's all-sufficiency to save sinners, is the prevalency and perpetuity of his intercession.*

I shall prosecute each of these doctrines in order.

DOCT. I. *Our Lord Jesus Christ is an able and all-sufficient Saviour.*

In handling this doctrine, I shall observe the following method.

I. I shall endeavour to make it appear that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour.

II. Shew how he became qualified to be so.

III. Make some improvement of the whole.

I. I am to make it appear, that Christ is an able and all-sufficient Saviour. Besides the assertion in the text, it will be evident from the following considerations.

*First*, If we consider the greatness of the number, and the hainousness of the nature of those sins, from which he is able to deliver us. Though your sins were as many as the sand upon the sea-shore, and as great as the mountains swelled up with fearful aggravations, that make them out of measure sinful; yet he can come over all these mountains of Bether as a roe or young hart; yea, he can say to these mountains, Be removed, and cast into the bottom of the sea of his own blood, and it shall be done.

This was prefigured by the scape-goat, Lev. xvi. 21. upon which the iniquities of all the children of Israel were laid, that he might carry them into the land of forgetfulness. So likewise the paschal lamb repre-

sented Christ and his all-sufficiency to save: and therefore John the Baptist, when he saw Christ, pointed at him, John i. 29. saying, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.* This was alluded to in the very imposition of his name, Matth. i. 21. *Thou shalt call his name Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins.* And here,

1. Christ saves from the pollution of sin, which of itself is enough to exclude us out of heaven for ever, into which no unclean thing can enter. But Christ saves from the filth and defilement of our foulest sins, and that by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 5. These spots of defilement, that have so defiled and stained the conscience, that no tears, though increased into an over-running stream, could ever be able to wash out, yet the sprinkling of the blood of Christ can purge the heart and conscience from dead works, Heb. ix. 14. and change the scarlet and crimson complexion of it into whiteness and purity. There is not a soul here this day, though his heart be as black and foul as hell, though his life swarm with abominable lusts of all sorts, but Christ, by his Holy Spirit and efficacious grace, can transform him, and of a desperate and outrageous sinner make him a humble and broken-hearted saint, of a lion make him a lamb, &c. See that black list, 1 Cor. vi. 9. 10. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Strange! might one say, is it possible that grace should change or mercy pardon, or the devil lose such great sinners as these were? The apostle says even concerning such notorious transgressors, ver. 11. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."



This all-sufficiency of Christ will yet more eminently appear to be glorious in the few following particulars.

(1.) Christ is able to effect this mighty change in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, without waiting upon the method of previous preparations or dispositions. The Spirit does not always stand knocking by common motions, persuasions, convictions, and legal terrors, but sometimes breathes upon and breaks open the heart, John iii. 8. and by his irresistible efficacy suddenly surprises the soul, ere ever it is aware, seizes on it, and captivates it to the obedience of Christ; as at mid-day when we remove the shutters of our windows, light does not enter in by degrees, but springs in at once, and enlightens the room with a perfect and full-grown brightness. So sometimes the Sun of Righteousness does arise without the formality of a dawning, though this indeed is not God's usual way in converting souls. Nay, he sometimes darts in both light and warmth at once through the whole heart. He can at once enlighten the dark mind, melt down the hard heart, subdue the stubborn will, tame the headstrong affections, demolish the strong holds of iniquity, that have been fortifying themselves against him possibly for many years. He can both wound and heal, destroy sin and plant grace, and that with such dispatch as will prevent not only the endeavours, but the observation of a sinner, as in the case of Saul, Act ix.

(2.) His all-sufficiency to save appears in this also, that sometimes he works this mighty change at such an unlikely season, when the sinner is in the hottest and most earnest prosecution of his lusts. Some have been surprised with grace in that very act of sin, that might have provoked justice to damn them: mercy hath made it an opportunity for their salvation. Yea some circumstances in their sin have proved to be the beginning of their conversion. Thus Saul, in the midst of his threatening, in the height and heat of persecution, when he was going to Damascus to seize and imprison those that made profession of the name of

Christ, was by the almighty grace of Christ turned to be an eminent Christian, and a successful preacher of that doctrine which he sought to suppress. Hence is that declaration, *Is. lvii. 8. I have seen his ways, and will heal him.*

(3.) Christ's all-sufficiency to save appears to be eminently glorious, in that he is pleased to work this great change by such contemptible means, as to the eye of human reason are altogether insufficient to effect it; and that is by the preaching of the word. Should we hear God himself speak out of heaven in thunder, as at mount Sinai; should we hear the voice of his terrible majesty founding in the clouds, "Repent, repent, or eternally perish;" should some angel that is now ministering among us, make himself visible, and from this place denounce wrath and vengeance against impenitent sinners, and promise peace and pardon to all that shall repent, believe, and reform their lives; nay, should some damned wretch be released out of hell, and sent all burning red-hot hither, wringing his hands, tearing his hair, screeching and howling, and that on purpose to warn you to repent, or for ever to be swallowed up in fiery wrath; and if you should see him breathing out flames at every wound: this were a likely course to move sinners (you would think) to repent; for who would be so senseless and obdurate as not to be convinced at such a strong sermon as this? But know, that God hath committed the word of reconciliation not unto them, but to men like yourselves, his ministers, who are called, fitted, furnished, and sent out by him for this work. To these earthen vessels (as they are called, *2 Cor. iv. 7.*) this work is committed, that the excellency of the power may be seen to be of God, and not of us. All that ministers can do, is to reprove men for their sins, threaten them with wrath, and admonish them to flee to Christ for his righteousness, beseeching them for his sake to be reconciled to God. That this should be of such force as to persuade the conscience, break the heart, ran-



sack the bowels of those very sinners who perhaps came with prejudices, contempt, and scorn; what is this but a plain demonstration of the almighty power of God, who by the foolishness of preaching saves those that believe, thereby convincing the world, that there is nothing so weak and contemptible but thereby God can effectuate great and wonderful things?

2. Christ is able to save not only from the filth and pollution of sin, but also from the guilt and condemnation of the greatest sin, and that by a full and free pardon and remission, Rom. v. 1. & viii. 1. 32.—

34. What greater sin can there be than blasphemy and persecution? Paul says, 1 Tim. i. 13. *I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy.* Therefore we cannot say with Cain, My iniquity is greater than it can be forgiven; I have outsinned mercy, and there is nothing remaining for me but a fearful expectation of fiery indignation, which will certainly devour me. Is not the blood of Christ of sufficient value? hath not this all-sufficient Saviour borne the whole wrath which thou shouldst have borne? hath not Christ brought life and immortality to light? and wilt thou be so injurious as to think thyself more vile than his blood is precious, or that there is more venom in thy sin than there is virtue in his blood to save thee? Let not the devil persuade and delude thee before the commission of thy sins, that they are so little that they need no pardon, and after the commission of them, that they are so heinous that they cannot be pardoned. This is very provoking to God; for all sin, as our Saviour tells us, Matth. xii. 31. (except the sin against the Holy Ghost), may be forgiven. The sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be pardoned, because it is a malicious rejection of the blood of Christ, and of all pardon, benefit, and remission by it.

*Obj.* Some are ready, in the day of their trouble and anguish of their spirit, to think that they have committed that dreadful sin, and so in the extreme

horror of their soul, they cry out that they are lost and damned, and that there is no hope nor pardon for them.

*Ans.* If it were true that they had committed this sin, there would indeed be no pardon for them, and no mercy to be expected. Yet this outcry confutes itself: for the sin against the Holy Ghost is of all others the least jealous and suspicious; and that person that is really afraid of committing it, has no ground to fear it. For the man that hath sinned that sin, is given up of God to a reprobate mind, to a seared conscience, and is grown quite past feeling, so as never to complain of his lost condition. So then thy very trouble, thy dejection on this account, shew that thou hast no ground to despair, and that thy sins are not unpardonable. Therefore be they what they will, the deformity of them never so ugly, the guilt of them as ghastly as thy guilty conscience represents it, yet there is an all-sufficiency in Christ to save thee fully: 1 John i. 7. *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.* Though they were more than the sand on the sea-shore, yet Christ's blood can cover them all.

Or is it the greatness or hainous nature of thy sins that afflicts thee? Possibly thou mayst think that I flatter thee, that thou shouldst gather ground of hope rather than despair; but I assure thee, that in this case thou hast a plea for pardon. The psalmist urges the same argument with God, Psal. xxv. 11. *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity.* Why? it may be it is so great that it cannot in justice be pardoned. No; but, *O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is very great.*

It is a very strange argument (one would think) thus to plead with man, "Pray pardon me, because I have done you a great injury." And yet with God, whose thoughts are not as the thoughts of men, and whose ways are not as the ways of men, this strange argument is very forcible and prevalent, "Lord, pardon me, because I have sinned greatly." It is better thus to plead with God, than to say, There



is no hope, and sink down in sullen despondency.

Now, Christ's ability to save the worst of sinners from the guilt and condemnation of sin, will appear,

(1.) If we consider that he is able to save the oldest and most accustomed sinner, to make the last hour of one's life the first of his happiness.

In this Christ's power and ability is wonderfully glorious. When an old sinner has gone on in sin all his days, and has arrived at the very brink of hell, when there are but a few steps between him and eternal death; that then Christ should give him a lift over that vast gulf, and transport him to glory; what can be said in this case, but what the psalmist saith, Psal. lxxxix. 13. *Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand?* and what Solomon saith, 1 Kings viii. 42. *They shall hear of—thy strong hand, and of thy stretched-out arm?* Indeed the case of such a gray-headed sinner is very sad and dangerous, and that because,

[1.] The devil's possession of an old and overgrown sinner is mightily confirmed both in strength and title. In strength, because he has had long time to fortify every strong hold of iniquity. In title, because the devil through long possession pleads prescription, so that it seems a vain attempt to rescue the sinner's soul from sin.

[2.] Old sinners are so soaked and involved in the cares and concerns of this world, that, by a strange sottishness, the nearer they approach their end, the longer and further they put off, and never think of eternity till they are irrecoverably swallowed up of it. Like those that dig in the mines, who spend the day insensibly; so these earth-worms load themselves with thick clay, and they dig still deeper, till they have opened a passage through earth into hell, into which at last they fall headlong.

[3.] Old sinners have long built up and flattered themselves with vain and false hopes of God's mercy, and proud conceits of their own merits, or some such

rotten principle or other: and with these they have weathered out many storms of conscience, and many powerful convictions. They will not forsake their hopes, nor let go their own confidence, but cry peace, peace to themselves, till they and their hopes perish together.

[4.] By a long course of sinning, in which they have wearied out divine patience, and all the strivings of the blessed Spirit of God, at last they have provoked the Lord to pronounce a curse and judicial hardness upon them: and because they would not be purged when he would have purged them, their iniquity and wrath seize on them, and seal and set them aside for the devil.

So that the condition of old sinners is very dangerous and deplorable, and very seldom are such converted and saved.

But notwithstanding their case is thus forlorn and desperate, yet the all-sufficiency of Christ may be extended to such as these, to bring them to salvation, to heal their souls, and save them from those sins that would deprive them of eternal felicity.

Poor old sinner, didst thou never read, that Christ did staunch an issue of blood that ran twelve years; that he strengthened a woman that was bowed together eighteen years; and healed a man that had an infirmity thirty and eight years? And shall a miracle of power be able to cure an old disease, and not a miracle of grace save an old sinner? Though thou hast been long under the power and tyranny of sin; yet come to Christ, though it be in the last hour of the day. Though thy sins are old, yet they are not so old as the tender mercies of God, which are everlasting. Thou art not too old for grace, nor too old to be borne again. Christ saved the thief upon the cross a little before his death, as if he would shew to the world what he can do in a desperate case. This is not in the least to encourage people in sin in hopes of mercy upon a death-bed, but only to persuade old sin-



ners to accept of the tenders of an all-sufficient Saviour. Thy day, O sinner, is almost spent, and thy life stands upon the brink of the grave: if thou now neglectest so great salvation as the Lord Jesus Christ offers to thee, thy death may prevent another offer of him to thee: therefore accept of Christ now, lest thou perish for ever.

(2.) Christ is able to save those who have frequently relapsed into the commission of the same sin. This is that, I know, which galls and stings the consciences of many sinners. It is not so much the multitude of their sins that affrights them, as their frequent commission of the same sins. "O," says one that has been guilty of reiterated and oft-repeated sins, "I have committed the same sins over and over again, notwithstanding I have prayed, resolved, and vowed against them; notwithstanding all the convictions and overtures I have had, and the resolutions that I have made, I have relapsed into the same sins, and those not of ordinary infirmity and human frailty, but sins of a gross and scandalous nature: and are such pardonable?"

I answer, They are. These relapses, though very dangerous, are not altogether incurable. It is hard to soften a heart that is treacherous to God and ourselves, and deeply engaged in some particular lust, when we are frequently overcome to the same corruption by the same temptation. But yet this is not such an aggravation as should leave our sins unpardoned, or us desperate. The Jews have indeed a tradition amongst them, that the fourth relapse into the same sin makes it an unpardonable sin. But we know that the mercy of God and the infinite merit of Christ are not flinted by any number of sins, nor by any number of the same sins. It is not with us as with drowning men; if they sink the fourth time, they will never rise again. Certainly that Christ who bids us forgive our brother seventy and seven times, and hath not excepted reiterated provocations, will upon our repentance

so much oftener forgive us, as his great mercy is above our charity; though we have committed these sins and provocations against himself, though it be matter of bitter and deep humiliation, that any corruption should be so prevalent as to overcome us, and notwithstanding after conviction, contrition, and heart-breaking confession, we return again to those sins: it is no matter of despair of mercy; for the grace of Christ can subdue such rooted sins as these; and what sin soever the grace of Christ can subdue, the mercy of God can pardon.

(3.) Christ can save the profanest and most notorious backslider. "Oh," says the relenting backslider, "I have been guilty of apostasy; I have tasted of the sweetness of the heavenly gift, and of the power of the world to come; and yet I have fallen back from the heavenly way of God, and have again wallowed in my former pollutions, from which I seemed sometime to have been relieved and refined: And is this apostasy pardonable?"

*Ans.* There is indeed an apostasy unpardonable, described in that dreadful place, Heb. vi. 8. It is not possible for such an one to be renewed by repentance. This is the same with the sin against the Holy Ghost; and this no man is guilty of, but he that has cast off all the means of grace tending to salvation and eternal life, and all desires after it.

There is also an apostasy from great attainments both of gifts and graces, when a man's zeal to God's glory cools, when his vigour in duties faints, when his relish to spiritual objects is vitiated, and he returns to a lukewarm and indifferent temper, and it may be to a wicked and sinful disposition. Though this case be very sad and dreadful, yet the man is both pardonable and recoverable. See Jer. iii. 22. *Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.* If the old sinner, if the apostate sinner be pardonable and capable of salvation, none should exclude themselves from the hopes of eternal life. Indeed, the only dan-



ger is, lest the wickedness of men abuse this comfortable doctrine, and turn that into presumption which is only intended to arm them against despair; which sins, viz. presumption and despair, tend in different ways to encourage and harden men in sin. The despairing sinner says, "If I must not be saved, to what purpose do I then live strictly? I will let loose the reins, and enjoy myself, and reap as great comfort as I can of pleasure; and if I must go to hell, I will make the way as delightful as I can." To such may be applied what Bildad says, Job xviii. 12. *His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side.* And the presumptuous sinner encourageth himself thus: "Christ is able to save to the uttermost the vilest sinners: we hear that no sin is beyond his all-sufficiency: Therefore" (says he) "what need we trouble ourselves to repent and reform? We will yet a while indulge ourselves in sin; for the power of Christ is able to save in the last moment of our lives, as well as after many years preparations." I should judge it one of the most conducive means to promote mens endeavours after godliness, if I could but bring them to a serious settled belief that salvation is attainable; for certainly so good a thing as salvation is, cannot but stir up affections and industry proportionable to our apprehensions of the value of it.

Hence then to tell men, what great sins Christ can pardon, and what great sinners he can save, is no encouragement to presumption, but rather to the exercise of holiness. For since the way to heaven is cleared of impossibilities, it is most unreasonable for men to stick at difficulties. But if any abuse this doctrine of Christ's all-sufficiency to sloth, to support their wickedness, promising themselves peace and happiness in the end, though they still go on in sin, presumptuously adding iniquity to iniquity; let me only tell them, and it will be enough to damp all their vain hopes, that though Christ be able to save sinners to the utter-

most, yet he is not able to save them in their sins, but only from their sins.

*Secondly*, Another evidence of Christ's all-sufficiency is this, that he is able to bestow upon us all sufficing mercy. He is able to instate us in the richest blessings that we are capable to receive or imagine; therefore he is able to save to the uttermost.

If I should now mention temporal blessings in this account, the instance would sink too low. The world stands but as an empty cipher, and signifies but a round nothing, when it is reckoned up with blessings which flow upon us through Christ's all-sufficiency. And yet what a big vanity is this world in the estimation of most men? Should I tell a covetous man, that Christ is able to make gold and silver not only as plenteous as stones, as in Solomon's time, but can turn stones into diamonds, and dirt into gold, and that he could bestow all the riches of the world upon him; sure this man would believe that Christ by this could prove himself an all-sufficient Saviour.

If I should say to the proud and ambitious, that Christ is able to make all the princes of the world crouch to and lick the dust of his feet; this would be a proof to him of his all-sufficiency. Indeed Christ can do all this; for he is the Lord of the whole world, and all things in it are at his nod and beck. Yet had he no better treasures to bestow than the whole world, it would not be satisfactory, since the whole earth is but a poor insufficient nothing.

Now, Christ will have his all-sufficiency to be seen and glorified, by giving that to his people which is an all-sufficient good. And there are three things Christ bestows on his people which are all-sufficient: An interest in an all-sufficient God; a possession of all-sufficing grace; and an all-satisfactory inheritance.

1. He gives them an interest in an all-sufficient God. Now, all-sufficiency is God's most comprehensive excellency, and that which expresses all the rest in one word. Wisdom, power, justice, goodness, truth,



mercy, &c. do each shine gloriously in their own sphere; but all-sufficiency is as it were a lustre that redounds from all these attributes combined together. Other attributes are God's several stars which shine with their proper and distinct lights; this, like the whole celestial lights united, takes in all the luminaries. Therefore when God proclaimed himself to Abraham, he says, *I am God almighty, or all-sufficient*; as if he had said, "I am wise in heart, mighty in power, merciful in disposition, just and good in proceedings, faithful in performances;" for all-sufficiency is the product of all the rest of God's attributes. O what a rich portion have they that have all God's attributes for them, as believers have! Heb. xi. 16. *God is not ashamed to be called our God.* And what can Christ do more to prove himself to be a Saviour to the uttermost, than by giving unto us an infinite boundless good? If the power, the wisdom, and the salvation of God be able to save them, then they are sure to be saved to the uttermost. Hence David glories so often that God was his portion, Psal. xvi. 5. lxxiii. 26. & cxviii.

2. Christ also inflates the soul in an all-sufficing portion of grace. Now, grace hath a double signification. It is taken either for subjective or objective grace, or, which is the same, for relative or real grace.

(1.) Relative grace is that grace whereby a change is made in the relation in which we stand, in a state of nature; in a sad and wretched relation to God. We were strangers, rebels, and enemies to God, and also guilty malefactors, and such as are liable to eternal condemnation. But now the grace of God intervening makes a blessed change in all these relations. Of strangers, we are made near, and inrolled into the family of heaven, and so are made children of God, and heirs of glory by adoption. Of enemies, we are made friends and intimates, and accepted through the Beloved. Of guilty malefactors, we are acquitted, pardoned, and accepted by the free and objective grace

of justification. Now, relative grace is not that which abides in us, but in God, and is only terminated upon us. Indeed it is nothing else but the acting of God's special love and favour toward us; and it is seldom taken in any other sense in scripture.

(2.) There is subjective or real grace, which is that whereby a change is wrought upon our natures in our first regeneration, and whereby it is carried on gradually to perfection in our further sanctification. Universal habits of holiness, which are infused in our conversion by God, which is called in scripture *the new man* and *the new creature*, we usually call the principle and working of grace; and so all the specifical habits, which are so many branches of this universal habit, are the several limbs and members of the new man, commonly called the graces of the Spirit, as the grace of faith, love, hope, &c.

Now, a Christian's portion in relative grace is a satisfactory portion. It is so great that he can desire no more; for this grace admits of no degrees; and he that hath any of it, hath as much as he can have. Here the weakest Christian may have abundance of comfort. Others possibly may have great measures of gifts and parts; and of the sanctifying graces of the Holy Ghost. But in relative grace all stand upon the same level. Adoption, justification, reconciliation, mystical union, all the privileges Christ hath purchased for believers, are all common, and no more belong to the strongest than the weakest and feeblest Christian. An infant may be as much a son and heir as a grown man. Others may have a larger measure of the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father; but none have a greater measure of the grace of adoption.

Again, as believers participation in relative grace is satisfactory; so likewise in the sanctifying graces of the Holy Spirit, this grace is sufficient.

[1.] In respect that the least degree of true grace is sufficient to make the heart upright and sincere; suf-



sufficient to break the reigning power of Satan, to cast the devil out of the throne, to sway the heart to God as its chiefest good, and to make his interest in the saints victorious and prevalent over the interest of the world and the flesh. And herein is Christ's power and ability to save most eminently glorious. Grace is a creature, in its own nature material and corruptible; and should Christ for a moment suspend his influences, every temptation, every corruption would soon destroy it. Now, for Christ to preserve it in the midst of so many strong and mighty corruptions that oppose it, argues as all-sufficient a power, as it does to preserve alive a single spark of fire in the midst of the raging and foaming sea.

Now, he not only preserves this grace alive, but makes it victorious and triumphant over all the powers of hell. They are not able to stand before it. It batters down the strong hold, it routs armies of lusts and temptations; it alters and changes every faculty of the soul, and reduces them all to obedience; as if it were Christ's design not only by his power to save the sinner, but to do it in such a way as to shame the devil, baffling and subduing him by such a weak and contemptible thing as grace, 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My grace" "is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in" "weakness."

[2.] The least degree of true and saving grace is sufficient to entitle the believer to heaven and glory. For the promise of eternal life is not made to the degrees of grace, but to the truth and sincerity of it; which is comfortable to weak saints. He that truly believes, though his faith cannot overcome all temptations, and tho' it be weak, yet it shall overcome, if it be true. A weak faith may make a full conveyance of the righteousness and merits of Christ, as well as the strong.

So that in the meanest degree of grace there is a twofold sufficiency. 1.) A sufficiency to break the reigning power and dominion of the strongest lust, And 2.) A sufficiency to give a firm title to heaven

and glory. Now, hath not Christ approved himself an all-sufficient Saviour, in giving and dispensing such grace, that the weakest and lowest condition of believers hath such a great sufficiency as this?

[3.] The least degree of saving grace is sufficient ground of joy and comfort, satisfaction and assurance. The believer may abound with these, even when he most of all complains of the poverty and weakness of his graces. It is not the degree of our graces that gives comfort and satisfaction, but the knowledge and evidence of the truth of them in our own conscience. The sun may be in a dark and dismal eclipse, when many glistering stars are not. The tallest trees cast the longest shades. So the Christian that is tallest and most eminent in godliness, may be under the blackest and saddest desertions. The measures of comfort are not stinted by the measures of grace; but the meanest grace is a ground of inward joy and satisfaction.

3. And if grace here be of such an all-sufficing nature, what will it be when mounted up into glory? If there be so much in the earnest, what will there be in the inheritance itself? If the sight and full fruition of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, if the society of angels and spirits of just men made perfect; if everlasting songs of praises and Hallelujahs; if eternal raptures and ecstasies, can be accounted a supporting and all-sufficing good; all these serve to extol the all-sufficiency of Christ our Saviour.

*Thirdly*, Christ's all-sufficiency to save sinners appears, in that he is able to save from the greatest miseries, and to supply the greatest wants.

1. From misery. There is but one state of misery that Christ cannot save from; and that is a state of damnation. And yet the damned spirits are not finally irrecoverable for want of intrinsic value in the death and satisfaction of Christ to atone for their guilt, or of power to deliver them, but because he never intended to purchase salvation for them. But suppose what state you will short of hell, we are recover-



able out of it by Christ. I shall instance in two things, wherein the depth and bottom of misery does consist.

1<sup>st</sup>, We are by our sin forfeited to the justice and vengeance of God; and he that can imagine a greater misery than this, never knew what it was to fall into the hands of the living God.

2<sup>dly</sup>, We are by nature in the possession of the devil; and he is that strong man that rules with rigour, and unto him universally we are all slaves and vassals. Now, when we are thus liable to the wrath of God as our Judge, and fallen into the hands of Satan as jailor, will it not be acknowledged that Christ saves from the utmost misery, if he can rescue us? Is there any thing that can deliver us, when both God and the devil, and all the powers of heaven and hell, set themselves against us? Yes; the Lord Jesus Christ hath done it already.

(1.) In respect of God and the divine justice, to which we stood obnoxious. He hath fully satisfied for our sins, and paid down an all-sufficient price for our deliverance. Therefore saith the apostle, *We are bought with a price*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And this is such a price as has discharged us, and paid the utmost farthing of all that we owe to divine justice. Therefore God saith, Job xxxiii. 24. *Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom*: that is, I have discharged him from the guilt of his sins and obligation to punishment; I am full satisfied as to all demands that I had against him.

But though the Judge be thus satisfied, yet the devil, the jailor, would fain retain the prisoner, and is not resolved to part with him on these terms. He hath possession in and over him; and therefore rescue him who can? Therefore,

(2.) Christ saves us by conquest and plain force, in respect of the devil. After he hath satisfied God, he dispossesses Satan, and completes the work of our redemption. Therefore we read of the sufferings of

Christ under both these notions. He gave his life a ransom, Matth. xx. 28. That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, Heb. ii. 14. Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it [the cross], Col. ii. 15. He hath exposed the devil and all the black host of hell to shame and infamy, in having their prey so strongly plucked from them; and he triumphed openly over them on the cross. He saves from the greatest misery imaginable, from the very danger of hell. Therefore so long as your case is not so desperate as to be in hell, it calls for great love and thankfulness from you to him for your deliverance. Christ is thus able to save to the uttermost, and from the greatest misery, and so is an all-sufficient Saviour.

2. He is able to relieve his people in their most pressing wants, be they inward or outward, corporal or spiritual. My God shall supply all your need, says the apostle, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus, Phil. iv. 19. Are you under several wants? he will not suffer you to want any thing that is good for you: For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. 12. Do you want pardon? In Christ we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace, Eph. i. 7. Is it peace with God that you want? We have it with him through Christ: Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 1. Is it peace of conscience? Ye have it in Christ: The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, Phil. iv. 7. So he is able to save to the uttermost.

Fourthly, Another demonstration of Christ's all-sufficiency is, that he is able to save when none else can. He saves those that come to him, when neither man



nor angel dare stand up in their behalf; and, if they did, they would not be able; for Christ alone procures and applies this salvation. And this he doth in two seasons.

1. When all others are but miserable comforters. Thus, when the dreadful terrors of the Almighty surround us, when God brandishes his sword over our heads, makes deep wounds, and, instead of balm, pours into our raw conscience fire and brimstone; O what saviour can then deliver us? Then those insolent hopes and vain confidences of salvation, with which we formerly supported ourselves, do all vanish; then our own righteousness in which we formerly trusted, appears to be nothing but filthy rags; then all the pleasures and debaucheries of the world that men have formerly delighted in, are only to them, as if a person stung with wasps should apply honey to assuage the smart, but the honey is turned into gall and wormwood. God and they are enemies; he hath dipt his arrows in the lake which burns with fire, and hath shot them all flaming into their souls; so that they are all but as one wound. What relief is there for them? *A wounded spirit who can bear?* Yet Christ bore this on the cross, when he cried, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And he that cured himself, can cure another. His blood poured into these wounds is a present remedy, and gives present ease and relief. And as he designs to make peace between God and us, so likewise between a man and himself, giving him that peace of conscience which quiets and appeases: *Is. lxi. 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, &c.* It is no less work to reconcile man and conscience together upon warrantable grounds, than to reconcile God and man together; and it is only Christ's all-sufficiency that can do either.

2. Another season is when we shall appear before the awful tribunal of God at the last day. What a ter-

rible sight will it be to behold heaven and earth all wallowing in flames, and angels flying through the air, gathering men before the judgement-seat; the Judge set on his throne, the books opened, God, conscience, and the devil accusing, and all the world crying out, Guilty, guilty, and the sentence passing on them accordingly, and millions of them dragged from the bar to the execution! When sinners are condemned, they cannot cry to honours, dignities, riches, &c. to save them. It is not their righteousness that can save them in that terrible day, for the defects of it will be no small part of the charge against them. What then is to save elect sinners? Their guilt is manifest, the Judge impartial, and if once sentence is passed, the execution will be speedy. Certainly now it is time for an all-sufficient Saviour to appear for his people, when the whole world is burning about them, hell under them, Satan frowning in their very faces, and the devils attending them at their very backs, ready to hurry them away to torments, and when there is no pity to be expected from angels or men. Then Christ appears to be an Advocate to answer for his people, and to put to silence all accusations produced against them; and by his satisfaction and perfect righteousness he brings them off with shouts, and with the applause of the glorious angels and saints. And thus it appears, that he is able to save when none else can.

*Fifthly*, Christ is able to save to the uttermost, in that he is able to save those that condemn themselves, and think their own salvation a thing impossible.

There is a twofold judging and condemning of one's self; one in point of merit and desert, the other in point of event and issue. The one judges himself as now deserving condemnation, the other that he must suffer it; the one as due, the other as unavoidable. Now, Christ saves from both these gloriously.

1. He saves those that judge themselves worthy of eternal death; yea, indeed he saves no others: 1 Cor. xi. 31. 32. *If we judge ourselves, we shall not be con-*



demned with the world. For it is Christ's design in saving souls to glorify his exceeding great and all-sufficient power and grace: and therefore we must acknowledge ourselves lost in ourselves, that so God's power and grace may be owned to be exceeding great and glorious in saving.

2. He can save those who judge themselves appointed to eternal death, and consigned over to damnation, and who think it impossible for them to be saved. Undoubtedly there are now many souls in heaven who on earth cried out, there was no mercy, no hope for them, that hell and wrath was their only portion. And this shews what an all-sufficient Saviour this is, who can save beyond our hopes, and contrary to our expectations.

II. The next general head is, to shew how Christ came to be thus qualified to be an all-sufficient Saviour.

1. By the Father's designation. The Father from all eternity pitched upon his Son for the accomplishment of man's redemption: *I have laid help upon one that is mighty: I have exalted one chosen out of the people*, Psal. lxxxix. 19. *I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion*, Psal. ii. 6. *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession*, ver. 8. The Father would have the salvation of souls to be brought about no otherwise than by the death and bloody sufferings of his Son, as the way to deliver them from going down to the pit of destruction.

2. By his own voluntary susception and undertaking for us: *Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of thy book it is written of me*, Psal. xl. 7. When neither sacrifice nor burnt-offerings were acceptable to God, nor could atone provoked justice, then Christ steps in with the generous and free-will offering of himself, "*Lo, I come*. If nothing will please that is offered for sin-

"ners, lo, I come freely and willingly to make my

“soul an offering for sin. Will my blood quench the  
“fire of thy fervent jealousy that sin makes, and  
“burns so hot? then I am ready to pour out the very  
“last drop to extinguish that flame.” O astonishing  
love! that the innocent Lamb of God should offer  
himself so freely to be slain by the sword of justice.  
O stupendous condescension, that he who was the  
great Lawgiver, should become a satisfaction to justice!

3. By reason of the infinite glory and excellency of the divine nature, which hath a double influence to make him an all-sufficient Saviour. For (1.) It puts an infinite worth and value upon his sacrifice, and so has made his offering acceptable, and a full price and ransom for sin. It is called *the blood of God*, Acts xx. 28. and certainly the blood of God must be an all-sufficient expiation for the sin of man. (2.) The divine nature gave Christ a power and ability to appease and satisfy infinite justice and wrath, and break the chains of death and the bars of the grave, under which he had been detained, else our salvation had been a thing desperate and deplorable. But herein is he manifested to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world with power, that he died and rose again.

4. By his human capacity. As he would not have been able to save us, unless he had been God; so he would not have been capable to save us, if he had not been man. Christ's humanity hath a twofold influence upon the work of redemption. (1.) That the person who is God as well as man, became passive, and a fit subject to bear the wrath of God. (2.) Hereby satisfaction is made to offended justice in the same nature which transgressed. By man came death, and by the man Christ Jesus came the resurrection from the dead, 1 Cor. xv. 12. *A body, saith our Saviour, hast thou given or prepared for me*, Heb. x. 5. To what end, the apostle tells us; *that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*. Both natures are here required; his hu-



man nature, without which he could not suffer death; and the divine nature, without which he could not destroy him that had the power of death.

5. By the overflowing and unmeasurable unction of the Holy Ghost. Thus he says himself, *Is. lxi. 1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me, &c. God gave him not the Spirit by measure, John iii. 24. God hath anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows, Psal. xlv. 7.* All this was to furnish him with gifts and graces suitable to the discharge of the great work of his mediatorship. All which considered, he is and must be well qualified to be an all-sufficient Saviour.

I now proceed to the application of this doctrine.

1. Is Christ an all-sufficient Saviour? This should make us to entertain high and honourable thoughts of this mighty Saviour. It should raise wonder in us, when we consider God's power and goodness in the work of creation; but when we contemplate these attributes as displayed in the work of redemption, it should raise our wonder to an ecstasy. Christ's almighty power was not so glorious then, when he placed this sun in the firmament, and kindled the stars as so many shining torches that dart forth light upon the world, as when he appeared in human nature, despised and of no account, in the form of a servant; to accomplish the wonderful work of our redemption. What he did in creation, was by the association and joint workmanship of the other persons in the blessed Trinity: but this whole work lay upon him. He trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath *alone*. In the former he shewed his power to be great, but did not put it forth to the utmost, as he did in the work of redemption. His person was infinite, and his sufferings were infinite, the one proportioned to the other. He could have done more in the creation, but he could not have suffered more in the work of man's redemption. He could have created more worlds, and might

have made more of each sort of creatures, and these far more beautiful and glorious than they are: but in the work of redemption Christ's infinite power is extended to the utmost; that we might honour him in his own person, as we honour the Father in his. And there is good reason why we should ascribe honour to him from whom we receive salvation \*.

2. This may shew us the identity and sameness of the salvation of the saints both in the Old and New Testament dispensation. This is a truth so evident, that I have no occasion to illustrate it.

3. Is Christ an all-sufficient Saviour? Why then do we rely upon that which is altogether insufficient? 2 Kings i. 3. "Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?" Is it because there is none deputed to be a Saviour, or able to save, that men betake themselves to false refuges, and lean upon broken reeds? Many set up other saviours of their own, as if it were just to distrust the mercy of God, because they have deserved his wrath. Many support themselves upon grounds no better than that mentioned in Job, to say to gold, *Thou art my hope*; and to fine gold, *Thou art my confidence*. Some trust presumptuously to the mercy of God; and this is the plea of many ignorant persons.

It is true, God is merciful, but his justice and severity is as infinite as his mercy. Why then dost thou not fear? Must God remit the attribute of his mercy, if he does not save thee? He is infinite in mercy, though he hath condemned thousands of others. But, may some say, we will never believe, that God, who made us, will destroy us. *Ans.* If this be true, all the devils will be saved. Were not they the workmanship of God; were they not more glorious creatures than thou art? And yet God spared them not, but cast them down to hell.—Some trust to their own righteousness, and set up their own good works

\* The author here adds, "See this well and sweetly spoken to in Brooks's Golden Key."



and duties for their all-sufficient saviour. There is nothing harder than to persuade men to look beyond themselves for life. As they have been their own destroyers, so they would fain be their own saviours. What is this but a delusory sottishness? And those are with the greatest difficulty beaten off from relying upon their own righteousness, who have the fewest good works. But this is but a weak ground of hope, which men venture their souls upon for eternal happiness. *The hope of the hypocrite is like the spider's web,* Job viii. 14. Spiders webs are spun out of their own bowels with much pains, setting themselves in the midst of it, but soon swept away with the besom. So it is with those vain hopes of sinners, that are spun out of their own bowels, out of their own good works and righteousness; and when they set themselves in the midst of them, expecting to catch heaven in their web, they will find it but a weak and defenceless thing. For conviction of sin will break this web; if not, death and judgement will; and then the soul will unexpectedly drop into hell.

4. Is Christ an all-sufficient Saviour, able to save to the uttermost? Let us then be persuaded to come to him, and accept of him for a Saviour. Were I now to press you to hard labour or some difficult duty, such as the exercise of mortification, self-denial, to be willing to lay down your lives for Christ; I might rationally suspect that these exhortations might be rejected, unless they came with great power, strong arguments, and prevalent motives. But as it is only to accept of Christ, who hath laid down his life for sinners, and of that salvation which he hath purchased for and tenders to you; certainly such an exhortation carries argument and motive enough in itself to prevail with you. But because men are so wedded to their sins, and because they are resolved against their own happiness, I shall lay down some considerations, which, if they do not persuade to close with Christ,

may at least evince, how unreasonably men put away salvation from them.

(1.) Consider, that you all stand in absolute need of an all-sufficient Saviour. You are lost beyond all the power and skill of men or angels to recover you, and God protests that he will save you by no other way but by Christ, Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." There is no choice for you, but either Christ or eternal damnation, either the Son of God or the wrath of God. You are all under guilt; and there is no other way of satisfaction to divine justice but either his blood or yours.

You now hear these things, and possibly slight them; but the day and hour is coming, and will not tarry, when death shall snatch you away to judgement, and when you shall lift up those hands all flaming at the great bar, with which you now thrust away salvation from you; and that Christ whom you have scorned and contemned as a merciful Saviour, you will then tremble before as a most severe and just Judge.

(2.) Consider, that if you now come to Christ, he is willing and ready to receive you. He himself tells you so, John vi. 37. *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* Indeed all-sufficiency to save without willingness, serves only to increase the anguish of your crime and destruction. But this may be for our comfort, that Christ hath power in his hand to save us, and willingness in his heart so to do. It is not Christ's power that despairing souls use to object against, but his will. "We know," say such, "that Christ is able to save us; but how know we that he is willing?" Truly his all-sufficiency gives us good security of his will. Hath he left the warm bosom of his Father, hath he undergone no less than infinite wrath, and all for this end, that he might be an all-sufficient Saviour; and shall we yet doubt after all this whether he is willing to save us? Certainly, if it cost Christ



so much to procure to himself ability to save, we have no reason to doubt that since he hath obtained that ability, he should now want a will to save. Therefore since Christ was appointed by the Father to save sinners, and since he was fitted with an all-sufficient power to effect salvation, and since this all-sufficiency wants not willingness, be persuaded to accept of him, and be as willing to be saved by him, as he is willing to save you.

(3.) Consider, that though Christ be willing to save to the uttermost, yet he is not able to save those that refuse and reject him. A medicine does not cure because it is compounded of such and such precious ingredients, though never so well suited to that distemper, but because it is applied: so neither is Christ as qualified and fitted to be an all-sufficient Saviour, in his Deity, humanity, and unction by the Holy Ghost, and his own willingness, but as received, believed in, and applied by faith to the sinner. And therefore what he hath done and suffered, will be all in vain to such as slight and do not apply him.

(4.) *Lastly*, Consider, if you do not accept of Christ, and salvation through him, you will be rejected by him to your greater and utter condemnation. Don't you think that it will heighten your sin here and your misery hereafter, that when God has been at so much cost and care to furnish and send an all-sufficient Saviour for you, that you should be found to neglect so great a salvation as this is? Think not that the tenders of Christ and salvation which are made to you, are indifferent; that though you slight and neglect them, you shall be in the same condition you were in before. No; but the despising Christ and salvation, and abusing this grace, are the things that inflame hell-fire, and make the never-dying worm to gnaw more cruelly, and will sink you deeper in the scalding lake that burns with fire and brimstone. It had been better for you, that there had never been a Christ tendered, grace had never been exhibited, and salvation not pur-

chased, if you neglect this salvation. We are, in case of final neglect, without hope or probability of recovery. Pray observe what the apostle speaks, after comparing Christ and Moses together, of the wrath that should follow upon the despising the one and the other, Heb. x. 28. 29. "He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, be persuaded to come to Christ, who is both able and willing to save you.

DOCT. II. *Such as expect salvation, must come to God through Jesus Christ.*

In prosecuting this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What it is to come to God.

II. That there is no coming to God but through Christ.

III. How we may be said to come to God through Christ.

IV. Apply.

I. I am to shew what it is to come to God.

*To come to God* is an usual phrase by which faith is set out in holy scripture. Coming and believing are all one, John vi. 35. *He that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst;* where *coming* and *believing* are put as terms of the same import and signification.

Now, this coming to God implies several acts of the soul, which must be explained with analogy and respect to outward motion. Here we are to know, that in c.



very motion there are two bounds or stages; that from which we come, and to which; *terminus a quo et ad quem.*

1. That which we come from is the curse and misery of our natural condition, else we can never please God, as the apostle asserts, Rom. viii. 8. *They that are in the flesh, cannot please God.* Mark the distinctness of the phrase, *in capiti irris*, *they that are in the flesh*; they that grow upon the old root, and are in their unregenerate state. There is a great deal of difference between being in the flesh, and having the flesh in us. The children of God, as long as they live in the world, have a mixed principle. They have flesh in them; but they are not so properly said to be in the flesh; for that denotes an absolute immersion in the carnal state, as being in the faith denotes a state of believing, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. So that out of this state we must come.

Now, this coming out of the flesh, or out of a natural state, is done by several acts, progresses, and tendencies, by which the soul comes from the curse and misery of the carnal state.

(1.) By a sensibleness of our distance from God in such a condition. There is no coming, but what presupposeth a sense of distance. Guilty sinners are at a vast distance from God, Luke xv. 13. Eph. ii. 13. and actual sins make the breach wider and wider, Is. lix. 2.

(2.) There must be a sense of the misery of such a condition. When the prodigal was in a far country, (by which the state of nature is represented), there with riot he spent his substance: but when he began to be in want, then he came to himself.

(3.) There must be a sense of our inability to return and come to him. Man is a proud creature, and loth to be obliged to another. He would be happy and sufficient of himself. We would eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; and if we could heal our own wounds, we would never return to God. The

state of fallen man is represented by the wandering of sheep, Is. liii. 6. *All we like sheep have gone astray.* Of all creatures sheep are most apt to stray, and most unable to return. Swine and dogs know the way home again, but sheep do not. So it is with the soul. It is Christ himself that must carry the strayed lamb home upon his shoulder; as the Holy Ghost alludes to that similitude, Luke xv. 5. We can never go to God upon our own feet, but we must be carried home upon Christ's shoulders. Therefore conviction will never be successful, till it brings the creature to come and lie down at God's feet, as utterly undone, and to say, as Jer. xxxi. 18. *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned.*

2. The next bound and stage in this motion is, 'To whom we do return; and that is to God; to God through Jesus Christ. God hath proclaimed from heaven, that he is well pleased with Christ, Matth. iii. 17. and he will not otherwise be pleased with his creatures. Now, to come to God is,

(1.) To be firmly persuaded that there is a God, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. xi. 6.

(2.) To have a serious purpose and practical decree issued forth in the soul. As the prodigal, when he was humbled with want, resolves, Luke xv. 18. *I will arise, and go to my father;* so there is a resolution, *I will arise, and go to God.* All grace is founded in this practical decree. So David professes his own shyness, that for a long time he kept off from God, and there was a distance between him and God; but at length he took up a serious purpose and determination, that he would go and humble himself to God, Psal. xxxii. 5. *I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.* The soul, being inclined by grace, resolves to come to God through Christ.

The Lord ascribes much to this *propose* and settled resolution, that with full purpose of heart men should cleave unto the Lord. Our own wants and needs will make us full of anxious inquiries; but the resolution



and decree of the soul comes from grace: for herein lies the formal essence of faith, a resolved casting of the soul upon Christ; which is the issue and result of all those anxious and serious debates that were wont to be in the soul, by which (in the prophet's language, Jer. xxx. 21.) the *heart is engaged to approach to God*; that is, when there is a charge laid upon the soul, by which the soul is engaged to come into his presence.

(3.) To be in the use of all the means of grace and divine appointment. Especially we must be much in the exercise of prayer and meditation, Psal. lxxv. 3. *O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.* It is the duty of all to come to God by prayer; and such as are habitual neglecters of this duty, cannot expect salvation. Consider this therefore, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.

(4.) To be constant and industrious in waiting upon divine ordinances, to be diligent in hearing the word read and preached, and partaking of the sacraments. The psalmist, Psal. xlii. 2, calls attendance on ordinances a coming to God. He was at that time banished from the ordinances; therefore he longs to have the benefit of constant attendance upon them, which he calls a coming to God; and not only so, but waiting there for the sensible effects of grace; for which many times the Lord makes the soul wait long. He has waited long on us; and therefore he sometimes makes us wait long, ere we receive the sensible effects of grace. Therefore this coming to God is described by an industrious and constant waiting. As Benhadad's servants watched the king of Israel for the word *brother*, 1 Kings xx. 33, so the soul waits upon God for one glimpse of his love. David expresses this earnest waiting by the waiting of a centinel or watchman for the dawning of the day, Psal. cxxx. 6. "My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning." Like as the weary centinel, that

is stiff and wet with the dews of the night, waits for the dawning of the morning, when he may be taken off from his charge and duty; so doth the poor soul wait for the first dawning and breaking out of the rays of grace upon it. Now, this is done not only at conversion, but in renewed accesses to God by our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. The next thing is to shew, that there is no coming to God but by Christ.

We must still come to him "as to a living stone," 1 Pet. ii. 4. In all exercises of religion we renew our access to Christ, and by Christ to God; in hearing as a Teacher; in prayer as an Advocate, for necessary help and supply; in the Lord's supper as the Master of the feast, Prov. ix. 1. Matth. xxii. 4.

There is no coming to God but by Christ: Acts iv. 12. *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* John x. 9. *I am the door.* There is no entrance but through him: "I am the way," says Christ, John xiv. 6. God is not accessible by sinners but through the Son of his love. He will have no dealings with men as to the communications of his grace, but through him, in whom he is well pleased; and he that cometh to God through Christ, shall not be rejected.

III. I come now to shew in what respects we are said to come to God through Christ.

1. In general, men are said to come to God through Christ, who take upon them the profession of being his servants and obedient subjects in Christ. The bare profession of religion brings us somewhat near to God. Thus the people of Israel are said to be "a people near unto God," Psal. cxlviii. 14. They were a step nearer to God than the Gentiles. So the profession of Christianity brings us near to God, who were sometime far off, Eph. ii. 13. Former-



by the Ephesians were far off from God, being "without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," ver. 12. Surely it is some advantage to come so near to God by Christ, as to have union and communion with the visible church of Christ. They are in that society and community of men, who are under God's special care and government above the rest of the world, and where they enjoy the means of salvation, and such ordinarily by which God uses to convey his choicest blessings.

2. Those come to God by Christ, who really enter into the evangelic state, and are converted by an unfeigned repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts xx. 21. The evangelic religion is a coming to God by Christ, or, as it is described by the apostle, Heb. x. 22. "a drawing nigh to God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith."

More particularly, we are said to come to God by Christ these three or four ways.

1. By his merit. As paradise was kept by a flaming sword, so all access to God is fenced and closed up by his justice and wrath. There was no pressing in, till Christ opened the way. God became man, drawing near to us by the vail of his flesh, Heb. x. 19. 20.; so by his sufferings, 1 Pet. iii. 18. Now, as in all acts of religion we are coming to God, so we must still hold on by Christ, till we come to our journey's end. We must use him as our continual medium and advocate with the Father.

2. By his grace. Christ carries us home on his shoulders rejoicing, as the man when he had found his lost sheep, Luke xv. 5. None can come to the Father but by him, John vi. 44. None can come without a divine power, and the irresistible efficacy of grace.

3. We are said to come to God by Christ,  
(1.) In the exercise of our graces. I shall instance in the three radical ones which constitute the new

creature, faith, hope, and love: for in the exercise of these communion with God doth consist.

[1.] Faith seeth God in Christ as sitting upon a throne of grace, ready to give out all manner of grace and sensible relief to penitent sinners, in all their necessities, temptations, and duties. Well then boldly trust him, and depend upon him. Thus we come to God by Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 4. *Such trust have we through Christ to Godward.* 1 Pet. i. 21. *By him we believe in God.* This is *living by faith* in Christ, so often spoke of in scripture. When you make use of him in all your wants, duties, and difficulties, expecting your Father's love and blessing to you through Christ alone, and the Spirit that must help and assist you in all your infirmities and temptations, as coming from the Father and the Son, not only procured, but given by him your head; and when, in all your doubts, and fears, and wants, you go to him in the Spirit, and to the Father by him, and by him alone; this is *living by Christ*.

[2.] Love, which vents itself in a desire of full communion with God, and delight in him. Desire is a coming to God, or a following hard after him. Delight is an adherence to him, as satisfied with so much as we enjoy of him. Our enjoyments here are partial, and therefore our delight is very imperfect; but yet, such as it is, it begets a study to please God, and fear to offend him. Our Father is in heaven; but in earth we have a glimpse of him, enough to make him amiable to the soul, Psal. xvii. 15. *As for me, says David, I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.* Thus we love him through Christ, or in Christ: for we study Christ to see the goodness, amiableness, and love of God in him, Eph. iii. 17.—19. “That Christ may dwell in  
“your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and  
“grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with  
“all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and  
“depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ;



“ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled  
 “ with all the fulness of God.” A condemning God  
 is not so loved as a gracious and pardoning God.  
 Surely we love him more as a Father than as a Judge.  
 And it is the Spirit of Christ that makes us cry, Abba,  
 Father; thereby expressing not only our confidence  
 and dependence, but affection: Gal. iv. 6. “ Because  
 “ ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his  
 “ Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

[3.] Hope. We come to God, as we longingly ex-  
 pect the full fruition of him. Love puts us upon seek-  
 ing God; but alas! upon earth we do but seek, in  
 heaven we expect to find. Hope causes us to hold on  
 seeking till we find, and get nearer to him; and makes  
 us resolve, that it is better to be a seeker of God than  
 a wanderer from him. We cannot have mount Zion  
 in the wilderness. For the present Christ doth but  
 guide us to the land of promise. We have a refreshing  
 by the way, manna in the desert, but not Canaan in  
 that dreary waste. Earth at the best will not be hea-  
 ven. Our perfect blessedness is where *God is all in all*,  
 1 Thess. ii. 16.; as at first he inclined us to set our  
 hearts upon another world, and to lay up our hopes  
 in heaven, and to part with all things seen, for that  
 God and glory which we never saw, Jude 31.

4. This coming to God by Christ is by all divine  
 ordinances or acts of worship. The use of our liberty  
 to approach to him in these duties, is one special way  
 of coming to him by Christ. To come to him in the  
 word as our Teacher, in the Lord's supper as the Ma-  
 ster of the feast, in prayer as our King and almighty  
 Helper, is a very great comfort and privilege. Cer-  
 tainly, if at any time then we come to God, we come  
 to him in worship; for then we turn our backs upon  
 all things else, that we may present ourselves before  
 his throne. But now thus we can only come by Christ.  
 If we come to receive a blessing in the word, we come  
 to receive the fruits of his purchase, John xvii. 19.  
 “ For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also

"might be sanctified through the truth." Thus, E. h. v. 26. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it "by the washing of water, by the word." If we come to the Lord's supper, that duty was instituted for the remembrance of Christ, that his flesh might be be meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.

But we come to God especially in invocation, or solemn calling upon God in a way of prayer or praise, in which all duties issue.

(1.) In a way of prayer. The mediation of Christ doth especially respect this duty; and you must put your suits into his hand, if you mean to speed, John xvi. 23. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my "name, he will give it you." There is no speaking to God, or hoping for any thing from him, but by Christ. Having such a Mediator, we may come boldly to him. The Father is well pleased with those desires and requests that are presented through him. We cannot have sufficient enough sense of his worth and our unworthiness. We must have all our dealings with God through him.

(2.) In a way of praise, Col. iii. 17. "Whatsoever "ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the "Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father "by him." All the success of our lawful undertakings or expectations is to be ascribed to God through Christ. All good things given to us from God as the prime author, are by Christ's mediation, Eph. v. 20. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God, and "the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." So also is the success of all ordinances and providences, &c. Christ's merit has procured the mercy, and makes the duty acceptable.

5. We come to God in the practice of all commanded duties. A Christian is always with God; he lives with him, and walks with him. He that is a stranger with God in his ordinary conversation, can never be familiar with him in his worship. And the graces of faith, hope, and love are acted, not only in worship,



but in ordinary practice ; while having a deep sense of an invisible God, and a constant aim at an invisible world, love does level and direct all our actions, that we may please this God, and attain the happiness of that unseen world. Every righteous action is done in obedience to God, and an aim at heaven, either by a noted thought, or the unobserved act of a potent habit. Sure I am, that a great part of our communion with God is carried on in our ordinary conversation ; 1 John i. 7. " But if we walk in the light, as he is " in the light, we have fellowship one with another ; " and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us " from all sin." And every holy action is a step towards heaven, as every sinful one is in itself a step to hell. Now this can only be by Christ. Unless we are in him, and assisted by his Spirit, how can we bring forth fruit unto God ? Phil. i. 11. " Being filled with " the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ " unto the glory and praise of God." He is the root of your life, and you live as upon him and by his life. The apostle saith in one clause that we are *for him*, in the other that we are *by him*. We depend upon him for our being, and perform not only some actions, but every action through the influence of his providence ; and God hath put our life into his hands ; and *because he liveth, we shall live also*, John xiv. 19. We can do nothing apart from Christ, but must use Christ as the branches do the root, or the members the head. We can do nothing apart then from him, but, in all businesses and in all conditions, we must live in him to God. Now this is to come to God by Christ.

I shall now make a short improvement of this doctrine.

Admire this privilege, that we may come to God through Christ. We have now leave to come to the throne of grace, Heb. x, 19. " Having boldness to " enter into holiest by the blood of Jesus." None under the law might enter into the *sanctum sanctorum*,

but the high priest. But this privilege we have, and it will stand; for it was dearly bought, Heb. iv. 16. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." God hath now laid aside the terror and rigour of his justice, that we may open our case to him. O, let us make use of this liberty. And if you would do it to purpose, observe the following directions.

1. See to come to God through Christ. Remember that he is the only Mediator and Daysman between God and guilty sinners: for God will be a consuming fire to all that adventure to approach him without his Son. And he says as Joseph to his brethren, "Unless you bring your brother Benjamin, you shall not see my face." So says the Father to us, Unless you bring Christ my Son with you, to introduce you, and to plead your cause, you shall not see my face in mercy. It is storied, that the king of Melitta would hear no petition, unless the petitioner brought his son in his arms. Even so we must believe in Christ, and rely upon his merits and intercession, otherwise we need not expect any thing but frowns and emanations of wrath from a holy and absolute God. *Nolo Deum absolutum*, says Luther; "O let me not have to do with an absolute God, a God out of Christ."

2. We must come penitently, having our hearts broken and melted down in holy contrition and godly sorrow for our sins. We must come to him *weeping as we go*, Jer. l. 4. It were well if we could thus come to God; we might expect yet the light of his countenance, and an answer of peace from him. And we must impute the want of success in all our applications to the throne of grace to this, that we are not duly affected with the sense of our sins.

3. We must come confidently, and with a firm persuasion of faith, resting in his goodness, and casting out all fears and doubts, Heb. x. 22. We must labour to have some measure of holy confidence, and



come with boldness to the throne of grace; otherwise we may provoke God to deal with us according to our doubts. Augustus was angry with a man who presented his supplication with a trembling hand. "What," says he, "do you present your petition to me, as one that gives meat to an elephant?"

4. We must come affectionately. We ought to have our souls filled with ardent and seraphic love at all times to God, but more especially when we make our solemn addresses to the throne of his grace.

5. We must come reverently. We must have grace whereby we may be helped to draw near to God, to serve him with reverence and godly fear. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be feared, and to be had in reverence of all that draw near to him."

6. We must come sincerely. We ought to draw near to him with the whole heart; otherwise he will complain of us as he did of a people of old, "This people draw near to me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men," II. xxix. 13.

7. *Lastly*, We must come constantly. We are never to give over our coming to him; and always the sooner and oftener, the welcomer. It is not with him as with men who are troubled by frequent visits. But God is never weary of those who approach him in sincerity, though never so frequently. Say then with David, Psal. v. 3. "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up:" and with those in Jer. iii. 22. "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God."

*Doctr. III. The great ground and reason of Christ's all-sufficiency to save sinners, is laid upon the prevalency of his intercession for us.*

In prosecuting this doctrine, I shall observe the following method.

- I. Speak of Christ's intercession as to its nature.
- II. Of the extent and latitude of it.
- III. Of the advantages that redound to believers from it.
- IV. Apply the whole.

I. For opening up the nature of Christ's intercession, we shall consider the term, and the intercession itself. The word is borrowed from courts of judicature, and signifies the action of a proxy or attorney, either in suing out the rights of the client, or answering the cavils and objections brought against him by the plaintiff. This doth Christ for believers. He appears for them, Psal. ii. 7. If. liii. 12. Heb. ix. 24. Rom. viii. 34. 1 John ii. 1. Rev. viii. 3. 4.

Intercession is threefold. There is,

1. A charitative intercession. And thus men are bound, by the rules and duty of charity and conscience, to pray and intercede for one another, 1 Tim. ii. 1. "I exhort therefore, that first all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men." See If. xxvii. 4. & lxii. 7. Rom. xv. 30. 1 Theff. v. 25.

2. An adjutory intercession. And thus the Holy Spirit makes intercession for believers, Rom. viii. 26. 27. He makes intercession, because by his gracious influences he excites those prayers and intercessions which we make for ourselves; and this is adjutory or helping intercession. We are indigent, and see not our own wants; we have not tongues to express them, and withal we are dull and heavy, and cannot make importunate supplications; and therefore of his mercy and free grace he sends his Spirit into our hearts, to discover our necessities, to raise our desires, and to put words into our mouths; and teaches us what to pray for, and how to pray as we ought.

3. There is an official or authoritative intercession. And this properly belongs to Christ, and may be considered under a twofold respect.



1<sup>st</sup>, His intercession in his state of humiliation. And this is in congruity to that low state wherein, with strong cries and tears, and groans, he made supplication to God, Heb. v. 7. Yea, when he was under the sharpest agonies, when he was bruised by his Father, and broken by men, suffering the wrath of the one and the wrongs of the other, when his own pains might have made his prayers selfish, or his enemies malice might have made him revengeful; yet even then he forgets not to intercede, Luke xxiii. 34. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* And his intercession was not the less regarded.

2<sup>dly</sup>, It may be considered as performed in our behalf in his state of glory and exaltation, after he had offered up himself a sacrifice, Rom. viii. 34. "It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." This intercession consists,

(1.) In his appearing in the court of heaven in both natures as our Mediator and Advocate, ready to answer any charge laid in against us, or suing out any good that belongs to us, Heb. ix. 24. "Christ is entered—into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." John xvii. 24. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am," &c. Thus there is a vision in Zech. iii. 1.; when Joshua is standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan ready to accuse him, the angel, Jesus Christ, interposes, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan." So that though Satan still accuse, Christ stands in heaven to plead for us, and silence Satan.

For understanding this passage, Zech. iii. 1. we are to know, that it was the custom of the accuser to stand at the right hand of the accused. Hence it is said, Psal. cix. 6. "Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand." Now here is Satan standing at Joshua's right hand to accuse him. But whereof doth he accuse him? That appears in the

words following, ver. 3. Joshua was clothed with filthy garments: An ordinary sign of sin. As a white garment is a sign of Christ's righteousness, so in scripture a filthy garment is a sign of vileness. Alas! Joshua was defiled with the pollution which he had got by the contagion of Babylon, and now at his return Satan lays it to his charge. But Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, steps in and takes off the accusation, ver. 2. "And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee." Twice he repeats it, to shew the fulness of Christ's intercession; i. e. "The Lord my God, my everlasting Father, rebuke and confound thee, O Satan, in this thy malicious opposition against my servant Joshua." And then he goes on in his apology for Joshua, ver. 2. *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* As if he had said, "Is not this one whom of my grace I have reserved amongst my people, whom I caused to pass through the fire of my indignation; and shall not my decree of grace stand firm and inviolable towards such an one?" Or thus, "Is not this a brand plucked newly out of the fire of affliction? was he not in the captivity of Babylon? and is it likely he should be there, but he would be defiled with the touch of pitch? Take a brand and pluck it out of the fire, and there will be some dust, and ashes, and filth about it. Why, Lord," says Christ, "this Joshua is but newly pulled out of the burning; and therefore he must needs have ashes, and dust, and filth about him. But come," says Christ to his holy angels, "take away the filthy garments from him; and" (says Christ to his servant Joshua). *Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.* And thus Christ took off the accusation that was brought against Joshua by Satan, for his filthy garments. In like manner does our blessed Intercessor at this instant. If a poor saint falls into any sin, and defiles his garments, Satan comes in



and takes the right hand of him, and accuses him before the Lord. But Christ our great High Priest, being at the right hand of his Father, takes up the cause, puts in a plea, and answers all the accusations of the enemy. "True, Lord, this poor soul hath filthy garments; but is he not a fire-brand newly plucked out of the fire? Was he not in his natural and sinful condition the other day? is he not yet partly regenerate and partly unregenerate? and therefore there must needs be some ashes, dust, and filth upon him. O my Father, my will is, that thou consider him in that respect. Thou knowest his frame, and thou rememberest that he is but dust. Though he hath filthy garments now upon him, yet I will give him change of raiment; I will clothe him with the robe of righteousness, and then thou shalt see no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel." Thus the Lord Jesus Christ steps in, and answers all the accusations that are brought against us by the law, or sin, or Satan, to God his Father; and in this respect he is called *our Advocate*, 1 John ii. 1. This was typified to us by the high priest's entering into the holy of holies with his hands full of incense, and with the blood of the sacrifice to sprinkle it upon the mercy-seat, Lev. xvi.

(2.) More particularly, the intercession of Christ consists,

[1.] In his presenting of his person for us. He himself went up to heaven, and presented himself to God. The apostle calls this an *appearing for us*, Heb. ix. 24. I believe there is an emphasis in the words *appearing for us*. But how does Christ appear for us? *Ans.* 1.) In a public manner. Whatsoever he did in this kind, he did it openly and publicly. He appears for us in the presence of God the Father, and of his saints and angels. Heaven's eyes are all upon him in his appearing for us. — 2.) He appears for us as a Mediator. He stands in the middle betwixt God and us. Hence it is, that he is God-man, that he might be a Mediator be-

tween God and men.—3.) He appears for us as a sponsor and pledge. Surely it is a comfort for a man to have a friend at court, at the prince's elbow, that may own him and appear for him. But if this friend be both a mediator and a surety, a mediator to request for him, and a surety to engage for him, O what comfort is this! Thus Christ appeared in every respect. He is a Mediator to request for us, and he is a Surety to engage for us, as Paul was for Onesimus, a mediator, *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus*; and a sponsor, *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account: I will repay it*, Philem. 9. 10. 18. 19. So is Christ Jesus for his saints. He is the Mediator of a better covenant, Heb. viii. 6. and he is a Surety of a better testament, Heb. vii. 22.—4.) He appears as a Solicitor to present and promote the desires and requests of the saints in such a way as that they may find acceptance with his Father. He is not idle now he is in heaven: but as on earth he ever went about doing good, so now in glory he is ever about his work of doing good. He spends all his time in heaven in promoting the good of his people. As from the beginning it was his care, so to the world's end it will be his business, to solicit his Father in behalf of his poor servants. He tells God, Thus and thus it is with his poor members; they are in want, in trouble, in distress, in affliction, in reproach: and then he presents their sighs, sobs, prayers, tears, and groans, and that in such a way as they may become acceptable to the Father.—5.) He appears as an Advocate, 1 John ii. 1. An advocate is more than a solicitor. An advocate is one that is of counsel for another, and that pleads his cause in open court. And such an Advocate is Christ to his people. [1.] He is of counsel with them. That is one of the titles given him by the prophet, *Is. ix. 6. Wonderful Counsellor*. He counsels them by his word and Spirit. [2.] He pleads for them. And this he doth in the high court of heaven, at the bar of God's own justice. There he pleads their cause, and an-



swers all the accusations that are brought in by Satan or their own conscience.—6.) He appears as a public agent or leger-ambassador. What that is, some tell us in the following particulars. (1. His work is to continue peace. And surely this is Christ's work: He is *our peace*, Eph. ii. 14. that is, the author, purchaser, and maintainer of our peace with God. For this purpose he sits at God's right hand, to intercede for us, and to maintain the peace and union betwixt God and us, Rom. v. 1. (2. His work is to maintain intercourse and correspondence. And surely this is Christ's work also, Eph. ii. 18. & iii. 12. By him it is that we come to God, and hold communion with him in all duties. Hence it is said, 1 Pet. iii. 18.—*that he might bring us to God*. (3. His work is to reconcile and take up emergent differences, that our transgressions make between God and us. (4. His work is to procure the welfare of the people or state where he negotiates. And this is no less Christ's work: for he seeks the welfare of his people; he sits at God's right hand to intercede for them; and commending their estate and condition to his Father, he makes it his request to his Father, that his members may have a continual supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 19. that they may be strengthened in temptations, confirmed and comforted in tribulations, delivered from every evil work, enabled for every good duty, and finally preserved unto his heavenly kingdom.

[2.] Christ's intercession consists in his presenting of his wounds, death, and blood, as a public satisfaction for the debt of sin, and as a public price for the purchase of our felicity.

There is a question among divines and schoolmen, Whether Christ hath not taken his wounds, or the signs, scars, and prints of them into heaven with him? and whether Christ, in presenting these wounds, scars, and prints unto his Father, doth not thereby intercede for us? Some, I think, are for the affirmative. Aquinas in John ii. distinguishes of Christ's in-

tercession as being threefold. The first before his passion, by devout prayer; the second at his passion, by effusion of his blood; and the third after his ascension, by the presentation of his wounds and scars. However this hold (for I dare not be too confident without scripture-ground), yet this we dare say, that Christ doth not only present himself, but the sacrifice of himself, and the infinite merit thereof. When he went to heaven, he carried with him absolutely the power, the merit, and the virtue of his wounds, death, and blood, into the presence of God the Father for us; and with his blood he sprinkled the mercy-seat (as it were) seven times. We read in Lev. xvi. 14. that when the high priest went within the vail, he took the blood of the bullock, and sprinkled it with his finger upon the mercy-seat seven times. Not only was the priest to kill the bullock without the holy of holies, but he was to enter with the blood into it, and to sprinkle the mercy-seat therein with it. Surely these were patterns of things to be done in the heavens. Christ, who was slain and crucified without the gate, carried his own blood into the holy of holies, or into the heaven of heavens, Heb. ix. 23. & xiii. 12. "For by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," Heb. ix. 12. And being come thither, he sprinkles it as it were on the mercy-seat, *i. e.* he applies it, and obtains mercy by it for his people, Heb. xii. 22. 24. "Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, — and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." It is upon mount Zion that this sprinkling is made. There is Jesus at God's right hand; there he stands as it were upon the mount, and there he sprinkles his blood round about him. Heaven is all besprinkled, as the mercy-seat in the holy of holies was, Lev. xvi. 14. 19. The earth is all besprinkled, as the altar out of the holy of holies was. Heaven and earth are all besprinkled with the blood of Jesus; so that the



saints and people of God are no where, but their doors and door-posts, and houses (I mean their bodies and souls) are all besprinkled with the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

[3.] In Christ's intercession he presents the persons of all the elect to God the Father, not only in general, but in particular. He presents them not simply in the general and total sum, that they are so many thousands for whom he died, and obtained mercy, and for whom he must procure salvation; not simply as the high priest among the Jews, who only had the names of the twelve tribes on his breast-plate of judgement, *i. e.* upon his heart, for a memorial for ever, Exod. xxviii. 29. but yet had not the name of every particular person. But our Lord Jesus Christ hath every particular elect soul's name engraven upon his breast-plate, and makes mention of every particular saint, John x. 3. He *knows every one of his sheep by name.* So let the meanest Christian, who is so obscure that his name stands unknown upon earth, take comfort and rejoice in this, that his name is well known in heaven: Luke x. 20. *Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.* Psal. cxii. 6. *The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*

[4.] As he presents the persons, so he also presents the duties and performances of his people to God the Father. All the duties and services of all the saints on earth do only ascend to God when presented by Christ; for he only is that angel who has a golden censer, and much incense given him, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of which incense ascendeth up before God, Rev. viii. 3. 4. John ix. 31. "If any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth." He speaks over for us the same prayers we have made before; and so he is well pleased with those duties which otherwise would be an abomination to him. This was plainly set forth by that ceremony of the high priest, in taking away the iniquity of their holy things, Exod. xxviii. 36. 38.

[5.] Christ in his intercession presents our plea or answer in heaven to all those accusations that are brought in against us. And this I take to be the meaning of that challenge, Rom. viii. 33. 34: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us." Christ intercedes; and who shall condemn? Christ takes off all accusations; and who shall charge? If the law, or sin, or Satan shall dare to accuse, our Jesus is ready at God's right hand to answer all. There is a vision in Zech. iii. full to this purpose, which I explained before,

[6.] Christ presents his own merits, and that as the full and equitable price of all the mercies for which he intercedes. For Christ's intercession is not a bare begging of blessings to be bestowed *gratis* upon us, but all his transactions in the court of heaven are in the way of satisfaction and purchase. Is sin to be pardoned? Lo, here is the blood of propitiation and atonement. Is mercy to be procured? Lo, here is the price of the purchase. All that we receive through Christ's intercession, is at once both the effect of free grace and bounty, and likewise the purchase of all-sufficiency and a meritorious price. In respect of us all this is free, free in respect of Christ's undertaking without our preordination or even solicitation, free as to performance without any premotion, free in effectual application of it to us. But though all this be free grace in respect of us; yet in respect of Christ it is the purchase of a full price, and cost him the laying aside of his own glory, the obscuring of himself in a vail of flesh, assuming a body to prepare him for the work of our redemption. It cost him the loss of his life, and the shedding of his most precious blood, to accomplish that redemption, 1 Cor. vi. 20. So he continually offers up himself in intercession, and presents his blood to the Father that was shed for sin, 1 John ii. 2. Hence



he is represented as a *Lamb as it had been slain, standing in the midst of the throne*, Rev. v. 6.

[7.] *Lastly*, Christ presents his will and desire to his Father in his intercession; which, by virtue of his merits, is always heard and granted: and this he doth not in a supplicatory manner, but by authority, by the absolute dominion which he hath over those mercies he intercedes for: John xvii. 24. "Father, I will  
 " that they also whom thou hast given me, be with  
 " me where I am; that they may behold my glory  
 " which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me be-  
 " fore the foundation of the world." and ver. 4. 5.  
 " I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the  
 " work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O  
 " Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with  
 " the glory which I had with thee before world was." This was a piece of Christ's prayer on earth; and some say it is a summary of Christ's intercession which now he makes in glory for us.

I know it is a question, whether Christ now in heaven does indeed, and in right propriety of speech, pray for us? Some able divines are for the negative, others for the affirmative. But leaving a liberty to those otherwise minded, I am of opinion with some, that Christ doth not only intercede by an interpretative prayer, as in presenting of himself and his merits to his Father, but also by an express prayer, or by an express and open representation of his will. And to this opinion I conceive the following texts agree, John xiv. 16. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give  
 " you another Comforter." And John xvi. 26. 27. when he says, "I say not unto you, that I will pray  
 " the Father for you," it is the highest intimation that he would pray for them; as it is our phrase, I do not say that I will do this or that for you, when indeed we will most surely do it, and that to purpose. Augustine in *presat. ad Psal. lxxxv.* 3. confirms this, "He prays for us, he prays in us, and he is prayed  
 " to by us. He prays for us as he is our Priest, he

"prays in us as he is our Head, and he is prayed to by us as he is our God." Ambrose *ad Rom.* viii. says, "Christ now prays for us as sometime he prayed for Peter, that *his faith should not fail*," &c. And if Christ prayed thus on earth, and if this prayer in the 17th chapter of John, be the summary of Christ's intercession and advocacy now when he is in heaven, we may imagine him thus praying. Certainly Christ presents his gracious will to his Father in heaven some way or other; and it were too nice to determine whether vocally or mentally. Yet we make no question, but he fervently and immoveably desires, that, for the perpetual virtue of his sacrifice, all his members may be accepted of God, and crowned with glory. Not only is there a cry of his blood in heaven, but Christ by his prayer seconds that cry of his blood.

An argument for this is handed down to us by Dr Goodwin in his *Christ set forth*, thus: As it was with Abel, so it is with Christ. Abel's blood went up to heaven, and Abel's soul went up to heaven; and by this means the cry of Abel's dead blood was seconded by the cry of Abel's living soul: his cause cried, and his soul cried; as it is said of the martyrs, that the souls of those that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, cried with a loud voice, saying, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* Rev. vi. 9. 10. Even so it is with Christ. His blood went up to heaven, and his soul went to heaven; yea his body and soul, and his whole person, went up to heaven; and by this means his cause cries, and he himself seconds the cry of his cause; so that he ever liveth as the great Master of Requests, to present his desires, that those for whom he died may be saved.

II. The next general head is, to consider Christ's intercession in the latitude and extent thereof; and that, 1. As to duration; and, 2. As to persons.

*First*, As to time; it was, 1. Before his assumption of flesh; and, 2. Shall continue to eternity.



1. Observe, that though it be most eminently performed since the hypostatical union, yet it was also performed effectually before his taking our flesh. For as Christ intercedes upon the account of those sufferings he hath undergone, so he interceded, before he was made flesh, on the account of that satisfaction he was to make. See Zech. i. 12. Dan. ix. 17.

2. Consider his intercession after his assuming our nature, and he intercedes for his church not only while militant on earth, but when triumphant in heaven. He *ever liveth to make intercession*, Heb. vii. 25. But you may ask,

*Quest.* What need is there for a priest to eternity?

*Ans.* Christ's intercession is twofold; conciliatory and reconciliatory. The first is that whereby mercy and all good things, both temporal, and spiritual, and eternal, are effectually procured for us, and bestowed upon us. The other is that whereby pardon, justification, and atonement are freely conferred upon us while on earth. We stand in need of both these intercessions; for they are suited to our twofold state of wants and miseries, and our state of sin and imperfection. Our wants are supplied by his conciliatory intercession, and our sins are pardoned by his reconciliatory one. And both these we have need of while we live here in this valley of tears. But as the church grows out of a state of want and sin, so these intercessions cease.

1. As to Christ's reconciliatory intercession, it ceases for ever in heaven, when he hath gathered together the number of the elect into one; for then they shall be in a perfect and sinless condition. We shall then no more offend God, never more be alienated from him. And when we shall be possessed of such a state, there shall be no more need of a Daysman to make intercession and reconciliation, for all distance and enmity shall be utterly abolished; therefore no more reconciliatory intercession.

2. As for his conciliatory intercession, whereby he

obtains mercy and all good things, that is all that respects the future glory of heaven. The former part of this shall soon cease; for when we shall be raised to a better life, all wants, inward and outward, shall cease.

Now Christ intercedes for future glory, as to its continuance, John xvii. 24. and that is it which is everlasting, that which he ever lives to make. He lives to intercede, that the elect saints be never cut off from God's presence, nor fall from their happiness, nor forfeit that glorious inheritance. And were it not for Christ's glorious intercession, that procures us a confirmation of that state, we should be in no better circumstances than the angels that fell were in.

*Secondly*, Consider the extent of Christ's intercession, as to the persons for whom he intercedes; and that is for all his people, in opposition to the reprobate world: John xvii. 9. *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.* As Christ died for none but the elect, so the elect alone are the objects of his intercession.

III. I come to consider Christ's intercession with respect to the singular advantages that flow from it. And surely these are great and manifold, to be obtained by so great an Advocate.

The business of an advocate is to defend his client from wrongs and injuries, and to procure good things for him. The first he is to do by answering the accusations and exceptions that are brought against him; and the latter, by suing out his right and title. Christ doth both these.

*First*, He defends us from those evils that our adversaries by their accusations bring against us, as we are sinners. God's justice, our own conscience, and Satan's malice come in as our adversaries, all laying their several charges against us. Justice calls for vengeance, conscience thunders, Satan rages, God calls a sinner as it were to the bar, "Sinner, such a sin



"thou art guilty of, that deserves eternal damnation." "True, Lord," says conscience, "I will witness against him." "True, Lord," says the devil too, "all this he did upon my suggestions and temptations, therefore consign him over to me for punishment." Now the guilty soul stands mute and trembling. This mighty Advocate steps in and answers all accusations. This he doth,

1. By reconciling God and conscience by his own blood, as it is the blood of atonement, Rom. v. 10. This blood cries louder for mercy than the blood of Abel for vengeance, Heb. x. 22.

2. By stopping the mouth of the devil, who, because he cannot be reconciled, therefore must be silenced, Zech. iii. 2. Thus our Lord by his intercession powerfully silences all accusations and charges brought against his people, Rom. viii. 33.

*Secondly*, He procures good things for us. And these are innumerable. In general, the whole work of salvation depends as well upon the life and intercession of Christ, as upon his death and sufferings.

There are two things requisite before any good thing can become ours. (1.) A meritorious procurement or purchase of the thing itself. (2.) An actual and effectual application of it to us. Now, the purchase is made by his death and sufferings; but the effectual application is by his life and intercession. By the former mercies are purchased, and by the latter the purchase is enjoyed. Therefore, if Christ had died only, and not risen again, and overcome and triumphed over death in its own empire, and over the grave, as in its own territories, his undertaking had redounded to his own disappointment, but not at all to our salvation. But herein he declares himself to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead, Rom. i. 4. Our hopes of salvation had all been buried with him in the same grave, had he not risen. But what he died to purchase, he liveth to bestow. He is risen, and his life puts virtue into his death,

Rom. v. 10. "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life," in respect of the effectual application.

These three benefits become effectual by his life.

1. Justification, Rom. iv. 25. If he had not risen, he himself could not have been justified; much less could we be justified by him. And therefore says the apostle, 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh; justified in the Spirit."

2. Sanctification is the powerful effect of Christ's life, though it was the purchase of his death, Phil. iii. 10. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection;" i. e. that power which through his resurrection he applies to us, and raises us up also to newness of life. And this the apostle calls our being *planted together in the likeness of his death.*

3. Our future inheritance of life and glory is ascribed to his life, John xiv. 19. *Because I live, ye shall live also; i. e. Because I live eternally in heaven, ye shall live eternally there too. Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's,* Rom. xiv. 8. might be inverted thus, Whether the Lord Jesus lives, he lives unto us; and whether he dies, he dies for us; and whether he lives or dies, it is for our advantage.

But more particularly we obtain hence,

1. Mystical union with Christ, John xvii. 21. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us." And from this union flows all the fellowship and communion which they have either with God or one another. Their communion with God depends upon their union with him in the sameness of the Spirit; and their communion among themselves depends upon their mutual union to the same body; and both depends upon this prayer of Christ's.



2. The inestimable gift of the Holy Ghost is a benefit of his intercession, John xvi. 7. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Chap. xiv. 16. 17. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever," &c. All the motions, breathings, evidences, and supports of the Holy Spirit that you enjoy, as they were the purchase of Christ's death, so also are they benefits obtained by his life and intercession.

3. Boldness and confidence at the throne of grace: Heb. iv. 14. 15. 16. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession," &c. Eph. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." Who would not be encouraged to go boldly to God, that hath such an Advocate to plead for him?

4. Hence also we receive all our strength and growth in grace, John i. 16. "And of his fulness have all we received and grace for grace." Grace with all its measures and degrees comes, as from Christ's fulness, so from his intercession.

5. Hence we obtain perseverance and continuance in grace; John xvii. 11. "Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one."

6. Hence also we are preserved both against temptation and from sin; when under temptation, John xvii. 15. "I pray—that thou shouldst keep them from the evil of the world;" from Satan, Luke xxii. 32. *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*

7. Acceptation of our persons and all our duties. He sees the iniquity of our holy things, and cleanses us from all unrighteousness; and the incense he offers up with the prayers of all the saints, Rev. viii. 3. 4. makes them acceptable and a sweet savour to God the Father.

8. The benefit of the Spirit's making intercession for us in our hearts. All our prayers are but the echoing back of the Spirit, Gal. iv. 6. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Rom. viii. 16. "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

*Quest.* But does Christ's intercession prevail?

*Ans.* Yes; and that because it is grounded,

1. Upon this, that he is our great High Priest to God, Heb. viii. 1. Now, it was the way of God to lend his ear in a special manner to the high priests; and therefore persons usually had recourse to them, when they would inquire of God, 1 Sam. ix. 9. *Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer.* People were wont to repair to the priests, and the priests were wont to go to God, and mediate for the people; and the people had experience that God would hearken to their cry. "Samuel cried unto the Lord, and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day," &c. 1 Sam. xii. 18. 19. 23. Now, such an High Priest (though with far more eminency) is Christ to God, and must needs prevail.

2. He was called to this office by God, Heb. v. 4. 5. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron: So also Christ glorified not himself, to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." It was God the Father that designed him to it, furnished him for it, and invested him in it, Psal. cx. 4. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Heb. viii. 1. "We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."

3. He is God's Son, Matth. iii. 17. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In many



places of scripture, where this part of Christ's priesthood or intercession is set down, his sonship is also expressed, or set forth, Heb. iv. 14. "We have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." Chap. v. 5. *Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee*; and it immediately follows, "Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." O, must not the intercession of such a Son be very prevalent? I say of such a Son: for was ever any son like this Son of God? was ever any so like his Father? so equal with his Father? We know he is a begotten Son, and yet never began to be a Son, He is the Son of the Father, and yet never began to have a Father. He is a branch of the King of ages, and yet in all the ages past was never but a King. Surely all the relations in the world are but a shadow of this relation between God and Christ. It is so near, that though they are two, (as in all relations there must needs be *relatum et correlatum*), yet Christ speaks of them as if they were but one, John x. 30. *I and my Father are one*. If then the Father should deny him any thing, he should deny himself, or cease to be one with his Son; which can never be. Christ is God's Son, his natural Son; his beloved Son, Matth. iii. 17. O then how prevalent must Christ's intercession be with God!

4. Christ is God himself; not only God's Son, but God himself. How powerful in this respect must his intercession be with the Father? It is true, that Christ is another subsistence and person from the Father; but Christ is one and the same God with the Father, and is the very essential, substantial, and noble representation of God himself. Christ is the very self of God, both God sending and God sent. Christ is the fellow of God, Zech. xiii. 7. Nay Christ is God, and not another God, but one God, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. If God sometimes spoke to his servants,

If. xlv. 11. *Concerning the work of my hands command ye me*; will not God much more say to Christ, as Psal. li. 8. *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession?* Then Christ must needs prevail.

5. Christ is God's darling upon this very account, because he intercedes for his people, John x. 17. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again." God lays it down by suffering, and I take it up again by rising, ascending up into heaven, and interceding there; *and therefore my Father loveth me.* O the love of God to Christ, and of God in Christ to all his saints! John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And Christ so loved the world, that he gave himself: and now again because Christ gave himself, and his gift is as a sweet-smelling savour unto God, therefore God loves Christ. O what a round of love is here! God loves Christ, and Christ loves us, and the Father loves Christ again for loving us. There is not an act of Christ in his work of our redemption, but the Father looks on it with love and liking; as at his baptism, Matth. iii. 17. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" at his death, If. liii. 11. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied;" and at his ascension, he hears of the intercessions of his soul, and he is delighted, Prov. viii. 29. 30. "I was daily his delight," orig. delights.

I come now to the practical improvement of this doctrine.

1. See here the boundless love of God and Christ to poor vile sinners. Divine love shines here with admirable brightness; and that, (1.) In appointing an Advocate for miserable sinners. If the best of the saints were left to themselves and their own pleas, their least sins would ruin them; their daily failings would sink



them into hell, if it were not for this daily Intercessor; and therefore it is proposed for the encouragement of believers, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father." (2.) In appointing such an Intercessor. He is not a mere man, nor one of the holy angels that stand about his throne; but his dear Son, the eternal darling and choice delight of his soul. He is the best and noblest person that heaven or earth can afford: he is one that is equal with himself. In all things he is equal with the Father in wisdom and knowledge; and so is better acquainted with the cases of his people than they can be themselves. He is equal with us in our nature, and so is experimentally acquainted with all our griefs and burdens. O how great is the love that shines here!

2. Is Christ an Advocate and Intercessor for his people? then they have no need of any other intercessor. The Antichristian church of Rome distinguishes between mediators of redemption and mediators of intercession. They tell us, that though the saints are not redeemers of the world, yet, as the courtiers of heaven, who have great power and interest there, they are mediators of intercession, and so may warrantably be sought unto by us. But this doctrine is dishonourable to Christ, and communicates to others that glory and praise which is due to him alone. Besides, there can be no mediator of intercession, but he that is mediator of redemption; because true intercession, as it is a public and authoritative act, is founded upon the satisfactory merits of the person interceding. He cannot be a right intercessor, who is not a propitiation also. Hence it is said, 1 John ii. 1. 2. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins.* Under the law none had authority to offer incense upon the altar of gold, but he that offered the sacrifice upon the altar of brass. When the high priest went to burn incense in the holy place, he was attended by none of the people, nor with any of the priests. So

not a man nor angel appears with Christ in heaven; as an intercessor to present the services of any: As they shed no blood for us, so they have none to sprinkle. Those that have no merit to purchase for themselves, have no merit to apply to others. It is only Christ who hath satisfied for his people's sins, that hath power and authority to plead for them. The glorified saints have been brought into heaven by the powerful efficacy of his sovereign grace, not to receive our services, but to rejoice in his salvation. They are co-heirs with Christ in his inheritance, not co-officers with him in his function. To yoke him with saints or angels, is to apprehend him very unmindful of his office, or lazy in his solicitations, that he needs a spur from those that are about him. This is to strip him of his priestly garments, and put them upon his inferiors: and it is as great a sacrilege to rob him of the honour of his advocacy, as to deny him the glory of his death.

3. See here the constancy of Christ's love to the elect. He did not only die for them on the earth, but he pleads for them in heaven. He loved them with an everlasting love. Before he stretched forth the heavens as a curtain, or laid the foundations of the earth, his delights were with the sons of men. As a proof of his eternal love, when the fulness of time was come, he assumed their nature to the unity of his person; he laid aside the robes of his glory, and veiled his divinity with the infirmities of flesh; he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was found in fashion as a man. He lived in a mean and low condition in the world, and was oftentimes pinched with poverty, and pressed with want: and at length he died the shameful and cursed death of the cross. This was the greatest demonstration of his love that ever was. And though he has done with dying, yet he has not done with living: for he is now at work in heaven for the saints; he carries their names on his breast, and will never leave praying



till that petition be fully answered, John xvii. 24.  
 "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me,  
 "be with me where I am, that they may behold my  
 "glory which thou hast given me."

4. The perseverance of the saints is infallible. Do you hear how affectionately Christ pleads, how earnestly he begs! how he fills his mouth with powerful arguments! how he chuses his words, and sets them in order! how he winds up his spirit to the highest pitch of zeal and fervency! and can you possibly doubt of his success? Can such a kind and affectionate Father deny the importunity, and the strong reasons and pleadings of such a dutiful and obedient Son? No, no; that can never be: he cannot deny him any request. Christ has the art and skill of prevailing with God: he hath the tongue of the learned, as appears in this. It is impossible that he can fail of success. The cause which he manages is just and right; the manner in which he pleads is powerful and weighty; and therefore the success of his suit is sure and unquestionable. Every word in his prayer is a chosen shaft, drawn to the head by a strong and skilful hand; and you need not doubt but it goes home to the white, and hits the mark he aims at. Does he pray with so much importunity, "Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me?" Surely then they shall be kept, if all the power in heaven can keep them. O think on this, believers, when dangers surround and threaten your souls or bodies, and when fears and doubts are multiplied within; when you are ready in your haste to say, that all men are liars, I shall one day perish by the hand of sin and Satan, and shall certainly fall and rise again no more. Ponder seriously that one encouragement which Christ gave Peter, *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* Christ's faithfulness and veracity is engaged for his people's perseverance, John x. 28. *I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* Though all the powers of hell and earth

should combine together against them, their utmost efforts would be in vain. As the church, so the saints are built upon an impregnable rock, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against them.

5. Is Christ an Advocate and Intercessor for his people? Then how sad and deplorable is the case of those who have no interest in him? If Christ would not plead for the world when he was on earth, he will not plead for it now in heaven. "I pray not for the world," says he, John xvii. 9. The wicked and ungodly are so far from having an interest in Christ's intercession for mercy, that they have a terrible share in his pleas for wrath. And he himself doth solemnly publish in his speech to the Father in that prophetic Psalm, xvi. 4. that he "will not take their names in" "to his lips that hasten after another god" by idolatrous services. If it be loss and misery to want the prayers of holy men, such as Noah, Daniel, Job, and Jeremiah; what a dreadful misery must it be to be without the prayers of the Saviour of the world, and to have the pleas of Christ directed against them? As the blood of Christ speaks better things than the blood of Abel, for all those on whom it is sprinkled; so it speaks bitterer things than the blood of Abel, to all such who by unbelief and impenitency trample upon it. To be guilty of man's blood is a very sad thing; but to have the blood of Christ accusing and crying to God against a soul, is unspeakably terrible. Surely, when he shall make inquisition for blood, when the day of his wrath and vengeance is come, he will make it appear by the judgements which he will execute, that this is a sin never to be expiated, but vengeance shall pursue the sinner to the bottom of hell, and make him roar and yell for ever in that dismal region of misery and wo. Little do men and women consider what they are doing, when they reject the precious offers of Christ tendered to them by the gospel. They are pouring contempt upon the only-begotten Son of God, and trampling upon his precious blood, which



is their only remedy. This exposeth them to fearful vengeance, as you see Heb. x. 28. 29. *He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*

6. Is Christ an Advocate and Intercessor for his people? Then see here the great happiness of believers, Christ is an Advocate and Intercessor for them. Now, their happiness in this will evidently appear, if you reflect but a little upon the qualities of this Intercessor, and then on the fruits and benefits which flow from his intercession. Will you consider, in the first place, what an Intercessor Christ is who is entrusted with the believer's cause.

(1.) He is an authoritative Intercessor, appointed of God to this office, and clothed with a commission for this very end. He doth not manage his intercession merely in a way of charity, but in a way of authority, as a person entrusted by God, and dignified to this purpose as a divine officer. As he was settled King in Zion, so he was made a Priest for ever, and had an order to ask of God on behalf of his people. Psal. ii. 8. forecited. To the same purpose it is said, Psal. lxxxix. 26. "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my salvation." As he hath authority to cry to God, so he hath assurance of the prevalency of his cry, in regard of the stability of his covenant: "God's love shall stand fast with him, and his mercy will he keep for ever," ver. 27. The treasures of divine mercies are reserved only to be opened and dispensed by him. Christ hath a right to make intercession for his people, a commission for it, and a command to discharge it. He is as much bound to intercede as he was to sacrifice, for it belongs as much to his priestly office as the other.

(2.) He is a skilful Intercessor, and has wisdom ex

nough to manage his people's cause, so that it shall not miscarry in his hand. He hath the tongue of the learned, and knows how to speak a word in season for him that is weary. It is required in an advocate, that he understand the law of the state, and the cause of his client that he undertakes to manage. Now, this is eminently to be found in him. He is well acquainted with his people's cause, and knows the misery and wretchedness of their condition. And he fully understands the law according to which he is to plead, namely, the articles of agreement between the Father and him. He knows the virtue and value of his blood, and the fulness of his own merit. He knows what arguments are most proper to be used for obtaining the things for which he pleads. If he had not more knowledge of his people and their cause than what their outward expressions furnish him with, he might mistake the business of a stammering spirit, and, on the other hand, be imposed upon by the flourishing expressions of a voluble tongue. He might be cheated by the hypocrisy of some, and mistake the concerns of his own people, who so often mistake themselves, and are not able to express their own wants. But this cannot be the case with him: for he is infinitely wise, and knows all things, and, as the evangelist remarks, *he needeth not that any should testify of man, for he knows what is in man*, John ii. 25.

(3.) He is a righteous and faithful Intercessor. His intercession is a part of his priestly office; and the writer to the Hebrews tells us, that we have a High Priest who was faithful to him that appointed him. Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a Son. He will never desert or forget any cause he hath to plead; neither will he betray it, nor use any deceit in pleading. An ordinary attorney may leave out some word which might make for the client, or put in something which may weaken his cause, having received a fee from both hands. But Christ is most faithful and true to the cause which he pleads: so that we may



warrantably trust our souls and all their concerns in his hands.

(4.) He is a merciful and compassionate Advocate. He assumed the nature of his people for this very end. Hence it is said, Heb. ii. 17. 18. "He took not upon him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people." He hath drunk deepest of the cup of sorrow, that he might be an all-sufficient Comforter to those that mourn; and the taste that he had of the infirmities of men, and the wrath which they are obnoxious unto, warms his heart, and strengthens his pleas, and makes him a more zealous solicitor at the throne of grace. Hence the apostle offers this to believers as a ground of comfort, Heb. iv. 15. "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He was framed in the same mould with us in regard of his nature, and cast into the same furnace of wrath which we had deserved. And this his experimental knowledge of the miseries of men, makes him more careful to solicit the liberty and absolution of every one that comes to God by him.

(5.) He is a most earnest and importunate Intercessor, and will not give over pleading till he gain his request. We find he undertook this work with the greatest chearfulness, Psal. xl. 7. 8. "Lo, I come: in the volume of thy book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God." And ye may see how he expressed his earnestness of old in that expostulatory address, Zech. i. 12. "O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?" Here he speaks as we use to do when we would rouse up a

drowly person in time of danger, and snatch him out of the fire. Some think that the censer full of burning coals from the altar, which the high priest was to carry within the vail, represented the ardency of Christ's affections, when he presents his people's prayers, and pleads for them in heaven.

(6.) He is a powerful and prevalent Intercessor. No cause can possibly miscarry in his hand. He is never denied any request that he asks of his Father. This will appear, if ye consider,

[1.] The great dignity and excellency of his person. He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. Sometimes the prayers of a saint have been very prevalent with God. Thus Jacob as a prince is said to *have had power with God, and prevailed.* Elijah by his prayers opened and shut the heavens. O then of what power must Christ's intercession be? who is the Son of God, and equal to the Father in all things. He is his Son in whom his soul delighteth, and whom the Father heareth always.

[2.] The efficacy of his intercession is evident from his great power and interest with the Father. He is his dear Son, the everlasting darling and delight of his soul. There is an unity between him and the Father, not only of being, but of will; and so he always hears and grants his requests.

[3.] If ye consider the nature of his intercession. He desires nothing but what becomes the holiness and righteousness of God to bestow. He demands nothing but what he well deserves, and hath purchased to his people by the effusion of his blood. He pleads for nothing but what the truth and righteousness of God pawned in the promise obliges him to bestow.

[4.] If ye consider the persons for whom he intercedes. They are the friends and children of God, who were gifted to him by the Father. They are those whom the Father loves, whom he hath ordained to everlasting glory in his eternal purpose and decree,



for whom he gave Christ, and whom he has effectually called by his grace.

(7.) *Lastly*, He is an everlasting Intercessor. For, says our text, *He ever liveth to make intercession for us*. He is made a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. He is not now a priest in point of oblation, for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified; and therefore it follows, that he continues a Priest in point of intercession. He will continue a Priest so long as the world lasts, till all the elect be brought home to glory; and he will continue to plead for the glorified saints to all eternity, that they may never be cut off from God's presence, nor fall from their happy state.

*Secondly*, The happiness of believers will appear, if you consider the many excellent blessings and benefits which they obtain by virtue of his intercession. As I spoke of these pretty largely in the doctrinal part, I shall now only name them, to the end your souls may be fired with love to this great Intercessor, and you may be restless to obtain an interest in him and these precious benefits.

By Christ's intercession they obtain the mystical union both with God and one another; justification, in a free and full pardon of all sins; sanctification; daily pardon of all their failings and miscarriages; acceptance of all their services; strength against temptation; access with boldness to the throne of grace; the inestimable gift of the Holy Spirit; perseverance in grace; and complete salvation.

7. Is it so that Christ is the Advocate and Intercessor of his people? Then they have sufficient ground of comfort under all their fears and discouragements; and they ought to improve this intercession for consolation to their souls against all that threaten them. More particularly,

(1.) This is matter of comfort to them when they are dejected at the thoughts of their prayers. Many times serious souls are sadly perplexed at the remem-

brance of their duties. They are so lame and imperfect, and so sullied with corruption, that God might justly reject them with disdain. But Christ is an Advocate that knows well how to separate the impertinencies and follies which flow from their mouths, to peruse and rectify their bills of request, and present them otherwise than they do themselves. He offers up all their prayers in his golden censer, and perfumes them with the incense of his precious merit. Though Satan distract their prayers, yet he cannot blemish Christ's powerful intercession.

(2.) This is matter of encouragement to believers under all the fears which disquiet their hearts, on the account of the malice and activity of the devil. This roaring lion is continually going about, seeking whom he may devour. But Christ foresees all his ambuscades, understands all his stratagems, and is ready to plead for them with the Father, as he did for Peter, *that their faith may not fail*. He will not suffer his people to be tempted above what they are able; but will with the temptation also make a way for them to escape.

(3.) This is sufficient to comfort their souls under all their sinful infirmities and lamented weaknesses. These are sad things that often draw sighs from their hearts, because they grieve the Spirit of God, sadden their own souls, and cloud their evidences for heaven. But the consideration of the intercession of their great High Priest, who is continually praying for them, and procuring pardon for them, should comfort them, that these shall never prove their ruin. *If any man sin, says the apostle, we have an Advocate with the Father.*

(4.) There is here comfort under all strayings of heart and deadness of spirit in duty. Many times believers complain of the deadness of their hearts, of the wanderings and strayings of their thoughts, and of the contractedness of their souls in duty. But what an encouragement is it to think, that Christ's blood speaks



when they cannot, and that it can plead powerfully for them, when they are not able to speak a word for themselves? To this purpose some understand that scripture, Cant. iii. 6. *Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and all powders of the merchant?* The prayers of the saints ascend many times like pillars of smoke, all sullied with their corruptions, and have more smoke than fire. But Christ perfumes them with his myrrh and frankincense, and makes them ascend as the odour of a sweet perfume.

(5.) This affords notable encouragement against all sinful damps and slavish fears, which arise from the consideration of the justice of God. When believers consider the threatenings of the law, and the inexorable severity of divine justice, this is apt to fill their hearts with trembling apprehensions. But when they look to Christ pleading the virtue of his own merit, then this affords singular relief as to all their despondencies and fears, and makes them approach him with a holy confidence, Heb. x. 19. 20.

(6.) It affords comfort against the fear of final apostasy and falling away. When believers consider the strength and power of their manifold corruptions, the malice, subtilty, and activity of the devil, and the many snares wherewith they are surrounded in the world, they are ready to conclude, that some day they shall fall by the hand of these powerful adversaries. But Christ's intercession assures them, that their faith shall not fail, but they shall be kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.

But some serious soul may say, "Alas! I am afraid that Christ does not intercede for me, for I am a vile guilty creature. Will he ever plead for such a rebel as I am?"

*Ans.* 1. It is only for such that Christ pleads. If you were not guilty, you would not need the benefit of his intercession. But he steps in between God and poor sinners, and pleads that his anger may be turned

**Disc. 2. Christ's Intercession opened up.**

9

away from them. This was prophesied of the Redeemer long before he was born, *He made intercession for the transgressors*, Is. liii. 12. And it is said, 1 John ii. 1. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father.*

2. There is no ground to doubt of it: for if he has opened his blessed side, and shed his precious blood for thee, will he not open his mouth to plead thy cause? If he has done that which is greater, there is no ground to doubt but he will do that which is less.

“But I am very unworthy; for I have abused his love, grieved his Spirit, and distrusted his word.”

*Ans.* 1. Christ's intercession is a work that is altogether free. He prays for his people, because he pities them; he looks not to their worthiness, but their wants.

2. Your sinning against him will not hinder his pleading for you. We have a notable instance of this in Aaron a type of him. The congregation murmured against Aaron, Num. xvi. yet though they had offended him, he ran with his censer when the plague broke in upon them, and stood between the dead and the living. Now, if there were so much bowels of compassion in Aaron, who was but a type of Christ, how much more will be in him who is greater than Aaron, and all the Aaronical priesthood?

3. Christ's love is everlasting. Though he visit your transgressions with rods, and your iniquities with chastisements, yet his loving-kindness will he not take from you, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail.

The next use I make of this doctrine, is by way of trial and examination. Try whether Christ be your Intercessor or not, and whether he pleads your cause in the court of heaven. This is a matter of the highest importance, and deserves your most serious inquiry. To assist you in this inquiry, consider,

1. If Christ be an Advocate and Intercessor for you, ye have been made deeply sensible of your great need of him. Ye have seen yourselves guilty criminals, ready to be arraigned before the divine tribunal, and



had none to plead your cause. Ye have seen the justice of God pursuing you at the heels, and have found yourselves at a total loss, as to any thing in yourselves, or in any of the creatures, what to do for your safety. Ye have been made to cry out in some measure with Peter's hearers, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* My duties cannot save me, my reformation cannot do it: neither is it in the power of angels or men. I must have Christ, or I will perish for evermore.

2. Ye have had some competent knowledge of the skill and ability of this blessed Intercessor. Ye have been persuaded, that he is able to save to the very uttermost all that come to God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Ye have been fully satisfied of the power and prevalency of his intercession, and that your cause should never miscarry in his hand; that he could answer all accusations and bills of indictment which might be brought in against you, and sue out all the good things for you that your wants and exigencies required. This knowledge of him is so needful, that there can be no faith without it: Psal. ix. 10. *They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee.*

3. Your hearts have been powerfully determined by divine grace to accept of him in the offer of the gospel. Ye have closed with him in all his offices, and taken him for your Lord and King, as well as for your Advocate and Intercessor. Ye have been content to imitate him in the holiness of his life, as well as to partake of the blessings and benefits purchased by his death. Ye have been content to be entirely at his disposal, and have said with Paul, at his conversion, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* I am ready to do or suffer any thing that thou seeest fit to enjoin.

4. If Christ be pleading for you in heaven, then his Spirit will be praying in you on the earth. This is one of the great blessings that he procures to all for whom he pleads, John xiv. 16. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he

“ may abide with you for ever.” Gal. iv. 6. He “ has sent forth his Spirit into your hearts, crying, Abba, “ Father.” The Spirit assists his people not only with his gifts and graces, but with sighs and groans. Look into your hearts then, and see if they be quickened and inflamed in prayer by the Spirit’s interceding within you. Then this is an evidence, that Christ himself is pleading for you without you.

The last use I shall make of this doctrine, is for exhortation to two sorts of persons; those who have no right or title to Christ’s intercession, and those who have.

*First*, To such as have no right or title to the blessed Mediator’s intercession. O will ye be entreated to seek an interest in this prevalent advocacy. Be restless till ye can say on good and warrantable grounds, *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* I shall press this upon you by a twofold consideration; the misery that attends the want of this on the one hand, and the great benefit that accompanies this privilege on the other. By the one I would endeavour through grace to work upon your hope, and by the other I would labour to excite your fear, to the end I may both draw and drive you to this necessary duty, upon which your eternal happiness depends.

1. Consider how wretched and miserable your condition is while Christ pleads not for you.

*1st*, Ye are as yet in your sins, living in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. There are burdens of guilt, heavier than mountains of lead, lying upon your consciences, though perhaps they are so benumbed and stupified that they do not feel it. Ye are under the curse of the law, under the power and dominion of sin, and in a miserable captivity to the devil. Ye are upon the very brink of the bottomless pit, and there is nothing between you and the devouring gulf but the brittle thread of life, that may soon be cut asunder. The wrath of God like a deluge of fire may



seize and burn you up. Ye are guilty criminals, arraigned before the divine tribunal, where Satan stands your accuser, bringing in the indictments of sin, pleading the righteousness of the law, and soliciting for judgement upon his accusation, and for the execution of the curse due to your crimes. Divine justice hath unsheathed and furbished its sword, and is ready to give you the fatal blow. There is no intercessor found for you; there is none in heaven or earth to speak a favourable word on your behalf. Ye have nothing to expect but a fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, that will devour all the adversaries of the Lord.

2dly, God will not hear the prayers and petitions which ye put up to him. Christ must perfume them with his merit, and the precious incense of his intercession, otherwise they can never ascend with a grateful flame. All your duties without Christ are detestable in his sight. Hence it is said, *The prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord.*

If Christ plead not for you, God will not hear you in the day of your calamity and distress. Ye may see this Prov. i. 24.—28. “Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.” God will say unto you as he did to the children of Israel, when they were oppressed by the Philistines and Ammonites, and they cried to him in their distress, Judg. x. 14. “Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.” More particularly,

(1.) He will not hear your prayers in the day of

your outward calamity and distress. Ye may be so beset with troubles and difficulties with respect to the outward man, that ye shall not know what course to steer, or what hand to turn yourselves unto. The judgements of God upon you may be very great and terrible, agreeable to that threatening, *Is. xxix. 6.* "Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire." These are metaphors borrowed from such things as are most terrible in nature, to shadow forth the dreadfulnesse of the judgements which the Lord sometimes is pleased to bring upon wicked men. And when the judgements of God are thus set in battle-array against them, it brings them into an extremity of distress; and then their hearts faint, their hands hang down, and they cry unto God in their trouble. But he will not hear them. This was the case of Saul, *1 Sam. xxviii. 15.* "I am sore distressed: for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more."

(2.) He will not hear you in the day of your inward perplexity and trouble. Conscience may sleep on securely for a time, but at length it will awake like a roaring lion. God may write bitter things against you before you go out of this world, and make you possess the iniquities of your youth. Ye may be made to cry out with Job, "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirits. The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." This made him cry out with a mournful accent, *chap. xix. 21.* "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." If once it be thus with you, ye will get no relief from any earthly things. Mountains of gold and silver cannot ease a troubled mind. All your former pleasures and delights will then have no more taste than the white of an egg. Nay, all outward trials and bodily pains are



lost in the depths of soul-sorrows, as little rivulets are in the vast sea. Your distress here may prove extreme and intolerable. The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear? In this distress ye may call to God, but he will not answer; ye may seek him early, but shall not find him; *when ye cry and shout, he may shut out your prayer, and not regard you, Lam. iii. 8.*

(3.) He will not hear you in the day of death. How great may be your perplexity in that dreadful day! Indeed it cannot be made language of by any mortal man. The torments and agonies of Christless sinners are next to those in hell. When they look forward, there is a vast and black eternity, the unknown regions of the other world, into which their souls must shortly enter. When they look behind them, there is the world with vanity and vexation of spirit engraven upon it in most legible characters. Then they see more of its vanity and emptiness than ever they would believe: then they see all their comforts and delights bidding them an everlasting farewell, and refusing to go one step farther with them. When they look round about them, they see their friends standing round their beds mourning over them, and a sad silence filling all the place; nothing heard but their dying groans, or the groans of their friends answering theirs. When they look above, there is a dreadful tribunal erected, and the righteous Judge of all the world ready to pass an irrevocable sentence upon them. When they look downward, there is nothing to be seen but the scorching flames of the devouring gulf ready to consume them; when within them, there is a full register of all their sins in the hand of conscience to give in against them at the tribunal of Christ, and this never-dying worm beginning to gnaw upon them; so that they are a *magor-missabib*, even ter or round about. And when their souls sit upon their quivering lips looking over to eternity, ready to be gone, fain would they bribe death, and protract time a little longer. The

soul, like the flame of an expiring lamp, vibrates and catches at the exhausted body, and is loth to depart: but part they must; for death is an inexorable enemy, will not be bribed with silver and gold, nor moved to spare them for all their cries. There is no discharge of that war. He hales the guilty soul before the judgement-seat of Christ, to answer for what has been done in the body, and to receive the punishment of all its sins. And will not this fill it with inconceivable anguish and horror! The door of mercy is then shut, and no intercessor to be found.

(4.) He will not hear your requests and supplications at the last day. When heaven's gates are closed, and ye shut out, ye will then cry with the foolish virgins, *Lord, Lord, open to us*, and take us in. But then he will return you that doleful and soul-piercing answer, *Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*. Every word of it is accented with horror. None of the creatures will then be able to afford you any relief. When ye cry to the hills and to the mountains to fall upon you, and hide you from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, they will not hear you. Glad would you be in that day to be hid in the grave, or entombed in the bowels of the earth, or that the mighty mountains would fall upon you, and crush you into nothing! But all your desires and supplications will be in vain. For there will not be one clod found to cover your head. The heavens will then be rolled together like a scroll; the elements will melt with fervent heat, and the earth, with the works therein, shall be burnt up. Nothing will remain for you but the flames of a devouring gulf, where ye will be tossed to and fro for ever with the enraged waves of God's wrath and fiery indignation. Oh! therefore, while the day of grace continues, be persuaded for the Lord's sake, and your own souls sake, to seek an interest in the



great Intercessor, that ye may be hid in his arms in the day of his wrath.

3dly, Ye who have no interest in this blessed Intercessor to pray for you and plead your cause, ye have him engaged against you. All his pleas are directed to your eternal shame and confusion. His blood is crying for vengeance upon all that despise and contemn it. If Abel's blood had a loud cry in the ears of God, how much louder does the blood of Christ cry, when he arises to make inquisition for this blood that has been trampled upon by many! Then his vengeance will pursue them into the bottom of hell: If ye get not this blood to plead for you, then it will cry for vengeance to be poured out upon you. O then come under the covert of the Redeemer's blood in the way of believing, and it will be your screen and fence against the wrath of God.

2. On the other hand, consider the great advantage of having Christ to be your Intercessor. Indeed the half of it can never be told. Then ye have a friend and favourite in the court of heaven to manage your cause, one ready to answer all the accusations and bills of indictment which are brought in against you; one at the throne of grace to offer up all your prayers and petitions to God, perfumed with the incense of his merit. Then ye may warrantably expect, that ye shall obtain all the good things which ye stand in need of: for he is a powerful and prevalent Intercessor: no cause can possibly miscarry in his hand; he is never denied any request that he asks of his Father,

Let the consideration of these things excite you to restless endeavours, till ye can say with the beloved disciple, *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* And in order to this,

1. Be persuaded of your great need of Christ as an Advocate. Ye cannot plead your own cause. Wo and misery would be to you for ever, if God should enter into judgement with you. If you have not the

benefit of Christ's intercession, you will be ruined for ever.

2. Accept of Christ in all his offices. Receive him as your Prophet to teach you, cure your blindness, and enlighten your mind in the knowledge of spiritual things; as your Priest to expiate your guilt, pardon your sins, justify you by his all-perfect righteousness, and plead your cause in the court of heaven; as your King to rule and govern you, and conquer all your spiritual adversaries.

3. Break off your sins by repentance. Turn to the Lord with your whole heart, to God in Christ as your God and Father; and walk in the way of holiness; remembering that Christ will not plead for any that go on obstinately in sin. Receive Christ Jesus into your hearts by faith, and walk worthy of him unto all well pleasing; and then you may be assured that he will be your Intercessor at the right hand of God.

*Secondly*, I come now to exhort the godly, the heirs of glory, to the suitable improvement of this comfortable subject. And here I would press you to several duties that are incumbent upon you.

1. This doctrine calls upon you to entertain ardent desires after our Lord Jesus carrying on the work of your salvation in his intercession. There is enough here to put us all into an ardent and longing desire after Christ. O then rouse up your souls, and take a view of this blessed object. Surely it will make you cry out, "O for a part in Christ's intercession! I would not be left out of Christ's intercession for a thousand worlds." Why, here you will see many lovely and desirable things.

(1.) Here you will see how that the present transaction of your souls salvation lies in Christ's intercession. The transactions of eternity were at an end when time began; the transactions of Christ promised had their period when he was incarnate; the transactions of Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension are now above seventeen hundred years old.



I know the virtue and influence of all these transactions continues, and will continue for ever, but the several actings had their periods. Only Christ's session at the right hand of the throne of God, his mission of the Spirit, and his blessed intercession, both were and now are the very present employment of Jesus Christ.

If it were possible that we could see into heaven, if with Stephen we could look up stedfastly, and see the heavens opened; if our eyes, by an extraordinary power, were carried through the azure sky, and thro' the whole expanse, till we came to the holy of holies, and to Jesus Christ seated on his radiant throne, what should we see, but Christ interceding, Christ busy with his Father in behalf of his poor saints? Now he prays, now he presents his person, merits, and intercession, saying, "Father, here are a company of  
"rebels justly fallen under thy displeasure, they de-  
"serve to be set at an eternal distance from thee; but  
"I must needs have them pardoned, and received in-  
"to thy bosom. Come make thy own terms; let ju-  
"stice require never so great satisfaction, I have paid  
"a sufficient price for all, and effectual for them;  
"give them what laws thou pleasest, I will undertake  
"they shall observe them. And to this purpose go,  
"Holy Spirit, to such and such souls, and enable  
"them to their duties and in their duties, and sanc-  
"tify them throughout in their souls, bodies, and  
"spirits." Now this is the present business of Jesus Christ, and therefore a most desirable work, and worthy our study and desire.

(2.) In this present business of Christ in heaven lies the application of all his former actings, whether of his habitual righteousness, or of his active and passive obedience. All those passages of Christ's incarnation, conception, circumcision, birth, life, and death, which more especially we look upon as the meritorious cause of our salvation, had been nothing to us, if they had not been applied by Christ. They were the means of impetration, but Christ's intercession is the means of

application. Christ purchased salvation by these pre-  
cedaneous acts, but he puts us in possession of our sal-  
vation by this perfective and consummate act of his  
intercession. The order of this is laid down by the  
apostle, Heb. v. 8. 9. 10. First he learned obedience  
by the things which he suffered; and then being made  
perfect, he became the author (or applying cause) of  
eternal salvation unto all that obey him; being to this  
purpose called of God an High Priest after the order  
of Melchisedec. Now, is not this a desirable act above  
all others? "Alas! what am I the better for a mine  
"of gold in such or such a field, in which I have no  
"property at all? I am thoroughly convinced, that  
"Christ's merits are most precious; but O that they  
"were mine! O that Christ's intercession would bring  
"the salve, and apply it to my sore! O that I could  
"hear that voice from heaven, My son, I was incar-  
"nate for thee, and conceived for thee; I obeyed the  
"law, and suffered the penalty thereof for thee; and  
"now I am interceding that thy very soul may have  
"the benefit! Well then, if Christ's intercession be  
"the applying cause, if it bring home to my soul all  
"the former transactions of Christ, saying, All these  
"are thine, even thine; Oh! how desirable must that  
"intercession be!"

(3.) In this application lies that communion and fel-  
lowship which we have with the Father and the Son,  
John xvii. 21. *I pray for these,—that they all may be  
one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they  
also may be one in us.* Understand this soberly. We  
cannot think that there should be that oneness in e-  
quality betwixt God and us, as betwixt God and  
Christ. No, no; but there is an oneness in similitude  
and reality, even in this life (2 Cor. iii. 18.), by virtue  
of Christ's intercession, with God and Christ, not only  
in comforts, but also in graces. And here you will  
mark this, when I speak of communion with God in  
this life, I mean especially the communication of  
grace between God and the soul, On God's part



there is a special influence of grace and favour to man; and on man's part there is a special return of grace and honour to God. See John xvii. 23. O, is not this a desirable thing?

(4.) In this communion lies the vision and fruition of Jesus Christ in glory. Grace brings to glory. If we have communion here, we shall have communion hereafter: and this also is a part of Christ's prayer and intercession, John xvii. 24. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." It is impossible that Christ should be in heaven, and that pieces and bits of Christ mystical should be in hell. Certainly Christ and you that are believers must be under one roof ere long. Is he not gone before to prepare a place, yea many mansions for you? John xiv. 2. We think them happy on earth that have their many stately halls and palaces, their summer and winter houses. But, O Christians, how happy will you be when you come to be lords and heirs of many stately mansions in the streets of heaven! But what speak I of mansions, when I am naming Christ? Mansions are nothing, many mansions are but little, yea many mansions in Christ's Father's house are but created chips of happiness, in comparison of that communion which, by virtue of Christ's intercession, we shall have with Christ. And therefore after Christ had spoke of many mansions, and of a place that he would prepare for his followers, he adds further, to increase their joy, ver. 3. "I will come again," says he, "and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." There their eyes will never be off their exalted Head, the centre of all their happiness. O what communication of glory will there be to each other! These *shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy,* Rev. iii. 4. \*

\* The author here adds, "See Mr Ebenezer Erskine in *locum*." The sermon is in that gentleman's works in 4 volumes, printed in

And now, if this be the business of Christ's intercession, if all these particulars be contained in the bowels of this one transaction, how is it that you are not gasping, groaning, sick unto death, with vehement thirst after thy part and portion in Christ's intercession? Is there such a thing as the passion of desire in thy heart? Cry, "Lord, I desire, help thou my faint desires, blow on my dying spark. O that it would flame! Lord, I desire that I may desire." Then this is a good token, and thus thou shalt be privileged.

2. Is Christ your Advocate? Then do not abuse this comfortable doctrine, and throw contempt upon this glorious privilege. Now, this is abused and profaned,

(1.) When men presume upon it to sin wilfully against their knowledge, and then run to Christ to interpose for their pardon. This is a horrid profanation of the holiness of this Intercessor, as if he were settled in that office to beg a licence for our crimes, and to sue for impunity to impenitent sinners.

(2.) The neglect of prayer is a contempt of this office. If ye offer up no sacrifices, he will have no matter to perfume by his obedience. By this men would render him an empty-handed Priest, full of merit, but to no purpose.

(3.) When believers are dejected, and walk disconsolately in the world, as if there were none in heaven to mind their cause. This is very dishonourable to him. Hath Christ lost his power, his eloquence, and interest with the Father? is the value of his sufferings now abated? is the market of free grace fallen? hath God utterly discarded the righteousness of his Son? is Christ that was carried triumphantly to heaven, now of no account there? or hath the blessed Redeemer cast off all thoughts and care of you? One might think that some of these things had happened,

1761, vol. i. p. 1. entitled, "God's little remnant keeping their garments clean in an evil day."



when Christians walk so feebly, with their hearts faint and their hands hanging down.

(4.) It is dishonourable to Christ's intercession, when men after their sins betake themselves to vows and alms for their solicitors, and not to the sacrifice and advocacy of this blessed Redeemer. Well, guard against all these, taking care that ye do not abuse or dishonour the Mediator's intercession.

3. Love your Intercessor. Let your affections be in heaven where he is. Though the people of Israel might not enter into the holy of holies with the high priest, when he went in to sprinkle the blood on the mercy-seat; yet they attended him with their hearts, and continued their wishes for his success, and expected his return with the notice of his acceptance. So do ye now; ye cannot go to heaven with your High Priest as yet; but let your affections be with him, and rejoice in the assured success of his negotiation. Let the desire of your souls be to his name, and to the remembrance of him.

4. Let it encourage you to go on in the good ways of God. This is the use the apostle would have believers to make of it, Heb. iv. 14. "Seeing we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." There is here a double encouragement to perseverance in your duty. The one is, that Jesus your head is already in heaven; and if the head be above the water, the body can never drown. The other is taken from the business wherewith he is employed there, namely his priesthood: he is passed into the heavens as your great High Priest, to intercede for you, and to manage your cause, therefore it shall never miscarry.

5. Is Christ interceding for you in heaven? Then see that ye appear for him on the earth. If he plead your interest in heaven, then it is your duty to defend his honour on the earth. See that ye employ all your

talents and opportunities this way, being valiant for his truth, cause, and interest in the world.

6. Let this encourage you to fervency and constancy in prayer. See that ye neglect not that excellent duty, seeing Christ is in heaven to present all your petitions to God, yea, to perfume as well as to present them. The apostle infers this from the consideration of Christ's intercession, Heb. iv. 16. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace; that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

7. See that ye employ this powerful Intercessor much. Ye have great need to do so on the account of your daily infirmities and imperfect services, and because of the manifold accusations which Satan is ready to bring against you. In all your distresses, infirmities, and darkness in the world, ye should get up to that *mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense*; Song iv. 6.; that is, as I understand it, to the passion of Christ which was bitter like myrrh, and to his intercession which is sweet like incense. Do this daily in the exercise of faith and prayer.

Upon the whole, consider what I have said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.



## DISCOURSE III.

The Nature, Ends, Manner, and Reasons of  
Christ's Sufferings unfolded \*.

I PETER iii. 18.

*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*

**T**HE great God, who is infinitely merciful, yes, mercy itself, mercy in the abstract, having purposed the restoration of a select number of the fallen posterity of Adam, by the sufferings and death of his Son the Lord Jesus Christ, and having decreed unalterably, according to the counsel of peace between them both, that his death should be communicated to the first believer in the earliest ages of time, did, immediately upon the back of the fall of our first parents, promulgate this his purpose, and notify his Son's being made a propitiation for sin, in the first gospel-promise that we have, Gen. iii. 15. And in due time Christ assumed man's nature, and suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, &c.

The sufferings of our blessed Redeemer were shadowed forth immediately after the primitive lapse by the sacrifices which were then offered by divine appointment, by our father Adam, and the patriarchs before the deluge, and after that period by Noah and his descendents, down to the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, but more clearly by the sacrifices, types, and figures enjoined in the Levitical law. They were clearly and distinctly prophesied of by the several

\* This discourse, consisting of several sermons, was delivered at Marytown, before the sacrament, about two years before the author's death.

prophets which the Lord raised up in the Jewish church, as by David in the book of psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Zechariah, &c. After the law and prophets, John the Baptist pointed Christ out as the sacrifice for sin: *Behold, says he, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world,* John i. 29. When the time of the decease that he was to accomplish at Jerusalem drew near, Christ himself foretold his sufferings, as you will find in different passages of the four evangelists. Since the time of his actual crucifixion, we have clear evidence of the fact in the sacred writings, of which that in the text is none of the least important; and his death and sufferings are exhibited in the sacrament of the supper, of which we have a near prospect.

The words of our text may be considered in their dependence, and in their substance.

As to their dependence, the word *for* intimates their connection with the preceding verse, "For it is better if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing." Whence we may observe, that of all motives that may prevail with Christians to suffer, when justly called thereto, this is the greatest, that Christ *both once suffered for sins, &c.* Since then Christ has left us a pattern, let us copy after it, whenever the will of God is that we suffer for his truth and cause.

The words considered in their substance or matter, contain an account of Christ's sufferings. The sufferer is Christ, the innocent spotless Lamb of God. What he suffered was death, *being put to death in the flesh.* His sufferings would not have availed us, if he had not fulfilled all righteousness, and become obedient unto the death. He appeared as our Surety, and therefore the Father would not abate him one farthing of the debt he had undertaken to pay. He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for his people.

His sufferings and death are here exaggerated in several particulars.



As to Christ's character, he was *just* or *righteous*. This epithet denotes not only his sinless, pure, and immaculate nature, but his twofold righteousness, his original intrinsic righteousness as God, and his acquired righteousness as Mediator, being his active and passive obedience, which last is transferred to his people for their justification.

What he suffered was death, and that only *once*, as his dying once was sufficient for the satisfaction of justice, and the salvation of sinners. That he suffered only *once*, is frequently asserted in scripture. See Rom. vi. 10. Heb. vii. 27. ix. 12. 28. & x. 14. From the collation of which passages it is evident, not only that Christ submitted to death but once, but also that the words, *to suffer*, *to die*, and *to be offered up*, are synonymous and equivalent; and that there is no foundation for the Antichristian practice of offering up Christ daily in the mass.

The persons for whom Christ suffered are described as *unjust* or *unrighteous*; guilty sinners, under a sentence of wrath and condemnation for the breach of God's law.

The cause of his sufferings was sin; He suffered once *for sins*; not the sins of the reprobate, for whom he would not pray, but the sins of the elect, those that were given him of the Father.

The end of his sufferings was, *that he might bring us to God*. By sin all had departed from God, and were at a great distance from him; but Christ died to bring them back to God, and restore them to his favour.

But though he suffered death for the sins of his people, and was laid in a cold grave, yet he triumphed over death in his own territories. *Being quickened by the Spirit*, by which we are to understand his divine nature; he broke the bands of death, rose triumphant-ly from the grave, and shewed himself to be the Lord of death and life. Though he lay under the arrest of death for a time, yet he was soon released, and laid a

foundation for our faith and hope of a joyful resurrection unto everlasting life.

The doctrine natively arising from the text is,

DOCT. *The Lord Jesus Christ, though perfectly just and righteous, suffered in his humanity, and died once for the sins and in the room of unrighteous sinners, in order to bring them back and reconcile them to God.*

Though this doctrine be abundantly clear from the text; yet I shall quote two or three scriptures for its further confirmation. The evangelical prophet says, Is. liii. 6. *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Here we have represented a judge, and two parties at the bar. The Judge is Jehovah, the most high God, The two parties are sinners and Christ. We are the principal debtors to divine justice, who had gone astray, and had nothing to pay our debt. Christ, as the Surety and Cautioner, appears in our room and place. The law by which the judge proceeds is that of the covenant of works, which we having broken, are unable to satisfy, either as to its condition or penalty. In this case the Surety takes the debt upon himself, and releases the poor insolvent debtors. *The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all*, of all that were given to him to be redeemed. O, that is a strange word, *the iniquity of us all!* The iniquities of the elect are like so many brooks and rivulets, any one of which it is impossible for them to pass over. But when Christ comes to satisfy for them, they are all collected together as it were into a great lake, or rather a vast sea, and he must pass thro' the same. All the sins of the elect met in Christ, and the whole like an enormous load were laid upon him, and he bore the whole weight for them. How great then must his sufferings have been? You may also consider the following passages: Rom. v. 6.—3. “For  
“when we were yet without strength, in due time  
“Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a  
“righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for



"a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." 2 Cor. v. 21. "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Rom. vi. 10. *In that he died, he died unto sin once.* There is no further need of his dying; for he hath done his work, and his death needs not be repeated. He died to sin once, not in regard of himself, for in him was no sin, but as charged with the sins of his people. And by his death he took away sin, both as to its guilt and power.

In discoursing further from this subject, I shall observe the following method.

I. I will shew that sin is a separating or departing from God. By which you will see the necessity of Christ's sacrifice for sin, your need to have recourse to it for taking away your sin, and that there is no way of turning to God but by Christ.

II. That though Christ was just and righteous, yet he really suffered.

III. That he suffered for sin and sinners.

IV. That he suffered in his humanity.

V. The manner of his sufferings and death.

VI. That he suffered for sins but once.

VII. The reasons why he suffered.

VIII. Lastly, Apply the subject.

I. Our first business is to shew that sin is a separation and a departing from God. So much is intimated in our being brought again to God here in the text. It is obvious also from Is. lix. 2. *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.* O what a black roll of sins is there in that and the following verses! heart and life sins, thought and lip sins, private and public sins. We were in our first creation most happy in our enjoying of God, but by our primitive defection

are made most miserable. No sooner was the first sin committed, but man ran away from God.

We find in holy scripture, that sin is compared to and expressly called a departing from God, *Is. i. 4.* "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward." Again, *Jer. ii. 12. 13.* "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord." Why, what is the matter? "for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." Thus also *Eph. ii. 13.* "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Hence, *Eph. iv. 18.* sinners are said to be "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them." There are two great sins mentioned here, their ignorance, and the alienation of their hearts from God, and both should deeply affect your hearts this day. Ignorance was the great sin of the Jews that estranged their hearts from God and Christ. And alas! it is the great and epidemic sin of this day. You see what Peter said to the Jews, *Acts iii. 17.* "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." What did they? They betrayed, denied, and killed the holy One, and the just. (1.) *I wot that you did it.* "It was not one traitor, Judas, that did this deed, but many traitors, you all of you did it. For when Pilate was determined to let him go, ye thirsted after his blood, and cried, Crucify him." So that here was a proceeding from evil to worse. They betray him, deny him, and kill him too. O what a monstrous piece of wickedness is this! "You did it, you the common people, as well as your rulers; you killed him, in that you cried to have him crucified. You



"are guilty of that blood the soldiers shed;" and though they were loth to hear of it, Acts v. 28. yet they did it. They who conducted him to Pilate, and cried for justice against him at Pilate's hands, were all murderers, all guilty of Christ's blood.

O wretched world! They who flocked to Jesus from all quarters, who followed him by thousands, who climbed up trees to see him, untiled houses to get in to him, who said, *Never man spake like this man*, who cut down branches, spread their garments in the way for him to tread upon, who sang Hosannahs, with a *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*, Mark. xi. 9.; these are the very self-same persons that within the compass of a week call for justice at the hands of Pilate, and nothing but Christ's innocent blood could quench their thirst. O what a sad and dreadful departure from God and Christ was this! Beware of it, my brethren. "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" 1 Sam. ii. 25. Now these men sinned against the Lord of life; and who first pleads for them but the Lord of life? "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," Luke xxiii. 34. (2.) They did it through ignorance. As to this, there is a simple nescience, or negative ignorance; and this may be, nay is in the saints and angels: for a finite creature cannot have an infinite power, and therefore must of necessity be ignorant of many things. Again, ignorance is the privation of knowledge, and is lawful and unlawful; of those things which we may know, and of those which we are bound to know. We may know many things which we are not bound to know, but may be ignorant of them without sin, such as the nature of inanimate creatures. No man in the day of judgement shall be judged and condemned for his ignorance in logic, astronomy, &c. but for the neglect of those duties he was bound to perform.

Now, in those things which we are bound to know,

there is a double ignorance. The one they call (as I hinted) simple; 1 Tim. i. 13. *I did it ignorantly*, says Paul. Being better informed, he became instantly a better man, and was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. There is another which we call gross or affected ignorance, when he that is ignorant will be ignorant still. He quenches the motions of the Spirit, slights the dictates of his conscience, neglects to inquire after or use the means, whereby he may be better informed. Thus the Sadducees did err (in opinion and practice), *not knowing the scriptures*, Matth. xxii. 29. They would not know them, but, as the psalmist says, Psal. lxxxii. 5. "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness." They knew not the scriptures, even though they were read every day in their synagogues.

But which of these was the Jews ignorance? Our Saviour tells us, Matth. xiii. 14. 15. "In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with thir ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." O Sirs, beware of this sin of gross ignorance; for it will alienate your hearts from the life of God, and prove ruinous in the end. Oh let me beg of you to consider this case seriously, and lay it to heart. Don't look on these things as mere enlargements, but as carrying a manifest truth and reality in them. And let the consideration of this carry us so much the nearer and closer to Christ, who is our propitiation and merciful covering, Rom. iii. 24. 25.; to the great Shepherd of our souls, who came from the bosom of his Father to seek and to save that which was lost, and to bring us back to God, from whom we have departed by our sins,



Now, that there is no possibility of turning and being brought back to God but by the sufferings of Christ, will appear if ye consider,

1. That man could not and cannot help himself, John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* He plunged himself into a very abyſs of miſery; but could not extricate himſelf out of it without divine aid. There were two grand impediments in the way that made it impoſſible for him to return to God, namely, God's juſtice and man's ſin. As to theſe, it behoved the one to be ſatiſfied, and the other removed, ere there could be acceſs to God. There was a ſentence paſſed, Rom. v. 12. that all had ſinned, and a curſe pronounced for the tranſgreſſion of the law, Gal. iii. 10. And no one was found that could ſatiſfy juſtice, and ſave poor guilty man, but Chriſt alone.

2. It was from eternity agreed upon at the council-table of heaven, that Chriſt ſhould bring back ſinners to God. To this purpoſe we have that ſweet word, Zech. vi. 13. *The council of peace ſhall be between them both.* 2 Cor. v. 19. "God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them." The work, 'tis true, was both very hard and weighty, yet Chriſt undertook the whole, and performed all that was either demanded or commanded.

3. It is the deſign of God in his gracious workings in the hearts of the children of men, to bring them back to God. See Jer. xxxii. 39. "I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever." 1 Pet. ii. 25. "Ye were as ſheep going aſtray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Biſhop of your ſouls."

II. The next general head is to ſhew, that though Chriſt was perfectly juſt and righteous, yet he actually ſuffered for ſin.

Our Redeemer was perfectly juſt and righteous, not

only virtually and relatively so by office, but actually and morally holy. So he is represented in the text, *the just*. Thus it was foretold he should be, *Is. xi. 3.* 4. "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." Thus he was that holy thing that was born of the virgin Mary, and was called the Son of God, *Luke i. 35.* Christ is righteous, yea righteousness itself. He is called *δικαιος*, *that just One*, by way of eminency, *Acts xxii. 14.* And he is so not only as he is God, but also as he is man, being altogether free from that original corruption that pollutes all the sons of Adam. Nay, in the whole course of his life, he was perfectly holy; there was no defect in him to the whole will of his Father. Therefore it is said, *1 Pet. ii. 22.* "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." The scripture tells us, *2 Cor. v. 21.* that "he knew no sin." So *1 John iii. 5.* "And ye know that he was manifested to take away sin, and in him is no sin." Again, *Heb. vii. 26.* "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;" holy in his conception, birth, life, and death. The devil could find nothing but holiness in him, *John xiv. 30.* From all which it appears, that our Lord was neither conceived in sin, nor born in sin; that he was wholly free from all sin, original or actual; and never had nor could have the least inclination to sin. It behoved him to be so, otherwise his life and sacrifice would not have been acceptable to God, or meritorious for us. His innocency and holiness, both of nature and action, is set forth in the preceding passages of scripture, and elsewhere by the innocency of a spotless lamb, *1 Pet. i. 19.* In which words it is God's purpose to lift up our hearts to an apprehension of a wonderful purity in Christ our blessed Redeemer. He is called a Lamb at least eight and twenty times in the book of Revelation. So that the Holy Ghost, you see here and elsewhere, avouches that he was most holy and just both in nature, life, and action. There could not



be a spot found in his actions, nor any the least blemish in his disposition. May I this day allude to that which you have, *Is. xvi. 1.* "O send ye the lamb to the ruler of the land," and see if ye can find any blemish in him.

Christ, though perfectly righteous, did really suffer, and bear our sins in his own body on the tree, *1 Pet. ii. 24. Is. liii. 4. 5. 6.* "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." It was foretold by Daniel, chap. ix. 26. "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." Christ says himself, *John x. 17.* "My Father loveth me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father," ver. 18. He shewed the real tokens of his sufferings to Thomas after his resurrection, *John xx. 27.* "Reach hither," says he to him, "thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side."

III. The next thing is to shew, that Christ suffered for sin, for sinners, for men, and not for fallen angels. This appears from *John iii. 16.* "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," *2 Cor. v. ult.* "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," *Rom. v. 9. 10.* forecited. *Rom. iv. ult.* "He was delivered (viz. to death) for our offences, and raised again for our justification." Sin was the meritorious and procuring cause of Christ's sufferings. Notwith-

standing all the pitiful evasions the execrable herd of Socinians use to shift off this, scripture-expressions are invincibly clear to this purpose: Is. liii. 4, 5. already quoted. Matth. viii. 17. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." 1 Pet. ii. 24. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." 2 Cor. v. 14. If one died for all, then were all dead." 1 Tim. ii. 6. "Who gave himself a ransom for all." Thus it is as clear as a sun-beam, that Christ suffered for sin, and in the room of sinners, in order to expiate their sins.

IV. I come now to shew, that Christ suffered in his humanity, or human nature, properly speaking. The divine nature of Christ was in the sufferer, though not in the sufferings. Christ, with respect to his Godhead, humbled himself by obscuring as it were its glory for a time. Though he was God-man, yet it is the property of the Godhead to be impassible and immutable. The person who suffered was God; but the human nature alone, as taken into personal union with the divine, was the subject of the sufferings.

Now, Christ suffered many ways in his humanity. Not to speak of the mean and low condition in which he was born, of the plot laid by the bloody Herod to cut him off in his cradle, and of the obscurity of his life for the first thirty years after his manifestation in the flesh, he suffered,

1. In his body. He suffered hunger, Matth. iv. 2. Luke iv. 2.; thirst, John iv. 6. 7. & xix. 28. Heb. iv. 15.; and all this without the least tincture of sin.
2. In his reputation, by base calumnies, John viii. 48. Mark iii. 22. Matth. xi. 19.
3. Contumelious reproaches and abuse, Matth. xxvi. 65. 67. Mark xiv. 65. Luke xxiii. 5.
4. Whippings and scourges, Matth. xxvii. 26. and at last death, even the death of the cross, not a temporal, but an eternal death; eternal death, not in duration, but equivalent thereto. This was the cup he



submissively prayed against, Matth. xxvi. 39. and for which he put up that great and loud cry on the cross, Matth. xxvii. 46. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This his death was, 1<sup>st</sup>, Painful, 1<sup>st</sup>. liii. 10. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him;" to bruise him as in a mortar. Three things made it exceeding painful.

(1.) The piercing his hands and feet with hideous nails (Psal. xxii. 16.), these sinewy and sensible parts. Christ's body was all over excellently well tempered, and so his sense admirably acute: and therefore to be digged through hands and feet, parts so full of nerves and sinews, could not fail exceedingly to augment and aggravate the smart of such piercing wounds.

(2.) Another thing that added much to the pain of Christ's death, was the extension and distortion of his body. The cross was a rack to him, and he was stretched as it were on tenter-hooks. For when any person was to be crucified, the cross (you must know) lay all along upon the ground till the party was nailed to it, and stretched out his full length; and this being done, the cross was erected. To this the psalmist had respect, when he cried out, *I may tell all my bones*, Psal. xxii. 17. He was so racked, that his bones were almost ready to start out of his skin.

(3.) The death of Christ was more painful, in that it was slow and of a gradual approach. If we compare Mark xv. 25. with ver. 34. we will find he hung on the cross from the third to the ninth hour; from nine in the morning till three after noon, six complete hours. We have read, that bloody tyrants, when they would make any man's death more than ordinary painful, have devised ways to cause a lingering death, and that when news was brought to one of them, that such a one had died suddenly, he cried out, *E-vasit*, "He hath made an escape." When death comes, the slower its pace is, the heavier is its tread; the longer the siege, the fiercer the storm. But this is true of Christ more than others: for when persons

are long in dying, they usually faint, and their spirits abate; they are brought step by step to death's door, and they are in a manner dead before they are actually so. But with our Lord Jesus it was quite otherwise. He stood all the while in perfect strength; the vigour and acuteness of his senses was not a whit abated, or made less sensible of pain. That is a notable remark, Mark xv. 37-39. "Jesus crieth with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And when the centurion which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God." A very strange inference, This man dies, and therefore he is the Son of God. The argument, one would think, were strong to the contrary: but here lies the strength of his reasoning: When he saw he so cried out, and died, he said he was the Son of God. He very well knew, that in other men strength abated leisurely, their speech grew low, and they used to falter and rattle in the throat; but as for this man, he gave such a cry at the last gasp as he never heard before, and thereupon infers truly, that he was the Son of God.

2dly, Another bitter ingredient in Christ's death was shame; and this was much more than the former. There is nothing so cutting, sharp, and intolerable to an ingenuous and noble spirit as shame. The pain of a hundred deaths is more tolerable to such than the reproach of one. Now in this respect the thieves shared much better than he did. We read of no irrisi-  
on, inscription, no taunts or sarcasms cast upon them; they had only pain to encounter. But Christ had both pain and scorn, Matth. xxvii. 29. "They bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail king of the Jews." Mark xiv. 65. "Some began to spit on him." Lk. i. 6. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting." The soldiers, the Jews, the very thieves, flouted him, Heb. xii. 2.



The cross itself was an ignominious death, the death of a slave. No free man, or person of fashion, was ever put to it; and to this day we say of one that is hanged, He dies like a dog. Yea, Christ did die not only such an ignominious and reproachful death as this, but he was sold to it, Zech. xi. 13. The goodly price he was prized at, was thirty pieces of silver, which in our money amounts but to thirty-seven shillings and sixpence, the value of the life of a slave, Exod. xxi. 32. Dr Collings, on Matthew, says the sum comes to three pounds fifteen shillings Sterling; and this last is most probable.

The death itself was shameful, the death of a slave; and this was an aggravating circumstance of ignominy, that he was sold to it as a slave. All the while he was dying, he stood naked on the cross, says one. Now, nakedness is our shame. He was scorned and derided on all sides: They mocked and shook their heads at him, saying, *He saved others, himself he cannot save: if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him*, Matth. xxvii. 42. Thieves and notorious villains were crucified with him, and he was placed in the midst, as if he were worse than both of them, and as if all their villanies had concentrated in him. They spit in his face; such a mark of infamy as God allotted for him that refused to build up his brother's house, Deut. xxy. 9. And all this was acted without the gate. They thought him not worthy to suffer within the gates or walls of their city. This the apostle notices, Heb. xliii. 12. *He suffered without the gate*; which in the next verse he explains, and calls *his reproach*; as, under the law, the blasphemers was, by God's appointment, to be stoned without the city.

3dly, The sting of Christ's death is yet behind: it was envenomed with a curse. Though pain be bad, and shame worse, yet the curse is worst of all, Deut. xxi. 23. "He that is hanged, is accursed of God." That was, it is true, a ceremonial curse; but it was

typical, and had special relation to Christ, who was under a real moral curse; and so it is applied by the apostle, Gal. iii. 13. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

The apostle Peter, Acts v. 30. puts a remarkable accent on this, speaking of Christ to the Jews, *Whom ye slew, says he, and hanged on a tree*; intimating, that bare slaying of him would not have been so much as hanging him on a tree. The Jews had many other ways of putting to death, as stoning, &c. \*; only crucifying had a worse idea annexed to it.

Christ was made sin for us, that he might meet with and intercept that wrath and curse that was due to us, and breaking out upon us.

We read in the history of his passion, that when Christ was going to wrestle with that dreadful agony in the garden, he passed over the brook Cedron, John xviii. 1.; and if we consult the history of the kings, 2 Chron. xv. 16, xxix. 6. & xxx. 14. we find, that when any godly ones among them, as Hezekiah, Aza, Josiah, reformed and purged the city and temple of idolatry, they cast the abominable and accursed things into the brook Kidron. Christ in his sufferings was to drink of this brook: *He shall drink of the brook in the way*, Psal. cx. ult. He drank the cup of the curse pure and unmixed, that his people might not be poisoned with it for ever.

V. I proceed to shew the manner how Christ suffered and died. It is worth our while to ponder the manner of Christ's suffering and dying for us, as it was both for our consolation and imitation.

i. He suffered and died willingly. His offering up himself in sacrifice was a free-will offering. His Father's determination made it necessary. Hence we read, that *Christ ought to suffer, and the Son of man must be lifted up*. But his Father's preordination gave not his

\* See Goodwin's Moses and Aaron.



death the formalley of a sacrifice. In regard of men it was violent; they slew him with wicked hands. This makes it not the sacrifice neither; they were not the priests, but the butchers of Christ. In respect of himself it was voluntary, which made it a sacrifice, Psal. xl. 7. 8. "Lo; I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God." John x. 17. 18. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." As if he had said, "Were it not my pleasure to part with my life, all the power you could exert could never wrest it out of my hand." In a word, it was their murderous will to have Christ's life, and his gracious will to give it: For said he to Peter, when he had drawn his sword in his defence, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" As if he had said to his disciples, "I need not such weapons. I could commission twelve legions of angels to be my lifeguard, though one was sufficient to do the business; as what a slaughter did one angel once make in Sennacherib's army? 2 Kings xix. 35. But I could put twelve legions in battle-array for my rescue, were I not as ready to be crucified, as they are to crucify me;" and when the soldiers (John xix. 33.) came to break his legs, they forbore because he was already dead. Such was his forwardness to die, Luke xii. 50. that he had strong desires to accomplish it: "I have a baptism to be baptized with," says he, "and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" He was in a manner pained and straitened till he came to die; and not to have died had been death to him.

2. He suffered death obediently. It was his will to die, and yet he died not of his own will, but in obedience to that of his Father. We have them both con-

joined, Heb. x. 7. "Lo, I come — to do thy will, O God." John x. 18. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." His death in respect of God was justice and mercy, in respect of men injustice and cruelty, and in respect of himself obedience and humility.

3. Christ died humbly and meekly. "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth." Not that he spoke nothing at all, but he was silent as to murmurings and revilings; that was the work of his persecutors. "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter," 1 Pet. ii. 23. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." He prayed for his enemies, Luke xxiii. 34. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "Friend," says he to Judas, "betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" O what meekness was here! and yet I think there was a tart rebuke in that kind compellation; and Christ calling him friend, smartly checked him for his unfriendly carriage. And when Peter cut off Malchus's ear, he says, "*Put up thy sword; we will have none of that club-law;*" he touches his ear, and heals it. Behold then the meek Lamb of God suffering and dying for the unjust, yea and for you, poor guilty sinners.

VI. The next general head is, to shew that Christ suffered death but once for sin.

This is abundantly clear from scripture, whatever adversaries aver to the contrary, Heb. vii. 27. In ver. 26. the apostle seasonably infers, "For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens: who needeth not daily, as those priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself." That is, He had no need



annually at a day to offer for the people's sins, as Aaron and his successors had, and did continue to do typically, till his sacrifice took place, and abolished them; he having offered once a sacrifice for the sins of the people, which outweighed all their multiplied sacrifices. And this he did once, when he himself died a sacrifice for sins, when he offered up the human nature, by the eternal Spirit, without spot a propitiatory sacrifice to God, when his body hung on the cross, and his soul ascended to the throne of God, entered into the holy of holies in heaven, with the blood of the testament, and atoned for all his people's sins. Thus Heb. ix. 12. "By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." ver. 28. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." Chap. x. 10. "By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." ver. 12. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God:" that is, This almighty minister Jesus Christ, having once offered, and no more, one sacrifice of his body for the sins of others, that they might be pardoned and remembered no more, it being of eternal virtue and efficacy, ceased from sacrificing any more, and ascended up to heaven to appear in the presence of God for them. This is the *once* that he entered heaven for expiation, satisfying the justice of God that was injured by sin, fulfilled the law, and then publicly appeared at God's throne, to shew that all was complete, Luke xxiii. 43.—46. John xix. 30. Thus once he did that which the high priests did annually typify, but could never accomplish for so many hundred years together: Heb. ix. 26. 28. "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many," Chap. x. 10. 12. both forecited. "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," ver. 14. "In that he died, he died unto sin once,"

Rom. vi. 10. "Christ hath once suffered for sins,"

1 Pet. iii. 18.

Now from the collation of those verses with one another, and comparing them with our text, it plainly appears, that these three phrases, *to suffer, to die, and to be offered up*, are *ισοδυναμα*, equivalent expressions, amounting to one and the same thing. And therefore the Papists do grossly err, when they allege that Christ is really offered in what they call the mass, though he does not suffer nor die. Their mistake appears from this, that if he be really offered, then he suffers and dies; and if he do not suffer, then he does not die, and therefore cannot be offered: because these three terms are one and the same according to the scriptures. Therefore the apostle adds, that he suffered and died once; and that for the greater verity of the thing. For our Lord died but once; and being raised from the dead, "he dieth no more," *nec amplius nec denuo*; "death hath no more dominion over him: for in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God," Rom. vi. 5. 10. "In that he died, he died unto sin once;" that is, he hath done his work, his death needs not be repeated.

Notice here the verity of the Christian religion, and that Christ our Redeemer was no deceiver: for his resurrection is a sufficient attestation to the dignity of his person and offices, Rom. i. 4. "Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." Acts xvii. 31. "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." This is a strong and undeniable argument, that Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour and Judge of the world. Where lies the force of the argument? Christ died, in the judgement and repute of the world, as a malefactor, but God justified him when he would not leave him under the power



of death, but raised him up, and exalted him to glory; thereby declaring to the world, that the world was mistaken about him, and that he was what he gave out himself to be, viz. the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world.

Behold here also the perfection of Christ's satisfaction, by this one sacrifice of himself. Therefore there needs no other sacrifice, nor any more sacrificing or offering, or dying, to abolish sin. Thus it is said, Rom. vi. 10. "He died unto sin once." Elsewhere the unity of the Mediator and his sacrifice are asserted in the strongest terms. For this purpose consult and seriously consider 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. x. 14. & ix. 28. Il. liii. 8. 1 Pet. i. 21. Heb. vi. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 29. 2 Cor. iv. 14.

VII. I proceed in the next place, to assign the reasons why this just and righteous One died. What cogent necessity was there upon Christ to die for us? We must not conceive, that Christ suffered and died upon trivial and impertinent considerations; as David said of Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 33. *Died Christ as a fool dieth?* No, sure; it was upon very weighty grounds. He died,

1. That scripture prophecies and predictions might be accomplished, all of which represent him as coming with dyed garments from Bozrah. The first scripture that ever mentions Christ, shews him a bleeding and crucified Saviour. Now, Christ was to make good to a tittle every thing that had been before written of him. This is remarkably pointed out to us by the evangelist Matthew, who above all the rest hath most punctually observed the fulfilling of prophecies, with whom the burden and under-song of almost every event is, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the mouth of the prophets.* See the account Christ gives himself of this upon the road with his disciples, Luke xxiv. 25. 26. "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! And beginning at

"Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself."

2. That scripture-types might be fulfilled, many whereof were designed to decipher and prefigure the death of Christ; as Isaac's being offered, the slaying of the sacrifices, the lifting up of the serpent, &c. Now, had not Christ's blood been shed, and he lifted up upon the cross, there had been no correspondency to the antitype, John iii. 14. Had not Christ been made a sacrifice, most of the legal ceremonies and prefigurations had been to no purpose.

3. That his will and testament might be firm and effectual. In his life he had given many precious legacies, and they had been all void and to no more purpose than a deed without a seal at it, unless ratified and confirmed. Had not Christ given himself to death, all the other gifts that he had bequeathed in his will had been giftless. This is the apostle's argument, Heb. ix. 16. 17. "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator: For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all, whilst the testator liveth." A man that makes a will, intends not that any should be the better of it, but after his death. Suppose one has never so much left in legacy, he is not a whit the richer so long as his friend lives: the will holds not good in law, nor can he sue for one penny of the sum bequeathed him, till the testator's death. Luke xxii. 20. "This cup (says Christ) is the new testament in my blood;" that new testament which is ratified by my blood. Christ's death gives life not only to his people, but to his promises, John xvi. 7. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

4. That justice might be satisfied. The sentence upon sin was passed from the mouth of a righteous judge.



Now, though justice might admit of a change of persons, there was no room for a change of penalties. Death was threatened, and death must be inflicted. If Christ will save sinners from death, justice will not let him save himself from death: Heb. ix. 22. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Christ, undertaking to cross out and cover the black lines of sin, must draw over them the red lines of his blood. What the chief priests said concerning Christ is true in some sense, though false in theirs, Matth. xxvii. 42. "He saved others, himself he cannot save." So Rom. iii. 25. 26. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

5. That he who had the power of death might be destroyed. "Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," Heb. ii. 14. Satan hath the power of death, not as a judge, but as an executioner; and Christ's death hath destroyed him; not taken away his being, or undeveloped him, but shattered his forces, broken and subdued him. The crucifying of Christ was the devil's plot: he put Judas upon betraying him, the Jews upon accusing of him, Pilate upon condemning him, the soldiers upon executing him; but our Lord cut off Goliath's head with Goliath's sword. It fared with the devil, as it is storied of a certain soldier, who being curiously inquisitive after the time of his death, went to an astrologer, who of a long time would make him no answer: till at length overcome by his importunity, he told him that he should die within three days. Whereat the soldier being angry, drew his sword, and killed the astrologer: for which murder within three days he was executed. And thus Satan plotting the death of Christ to protract his own ruin, promoted and procured it. Our Saviour's death

gave him such a death's wound, as he will never get cured. The lion is terrible, says Chrysostom, not only awake, but sleeping. And so Christ not only living but dying, came off a conqueror, as Samson, Judg. xvi. 30. at his death pulled down the pillars of the house, and thereby made a greater rout among the Philistines, than in all his life. And therefore it is very observable, that when the death of Christ approached, Satan, perceiving how great disadvantage was like thereby to accrue to him and his kingdom, bestirred himself by all means possible to hinder it, though he had been so active to promote it before, and his conduct herein was a heap of inconsistencies. He put Peter upon dissuading him, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee," Matth. xvi. 22. Christ presently smelt out Satan in that advice, as appears by his rebuke, ver. 23. "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." He buzzed dreams into the head of Pilate's wife, Matth. xxvii. 19. thereby endeavouring to divert him from pronouncing sentence upon Christ. But all his stratagems could not defeat the designs of heaven.

6. To take away the meritorious cause of his death, viz. sin. And verily had all the devils in hell been routed, and sin, that devil in the bosom, remained undisturbed, it had been an inconsiderable victory: Rom. viii. 3. *God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, (that is, by a sacrifice for sin \*), condemned sin in the flesh.* Christ by his blood wrote a bill of indictment and condemnation against sin, and undermined it as to its dominion and damning power: Rom. vi. 10. "In that he died, he died unto sin once." The saints die unto sin, namely by mortification, ver. 11. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed

\* The author here adds, "There is such another ellipsis, Heb. x. 6. *In burnt-offerings, and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.*"



"unto sin." But thus there was never any man alive in Christ, but he died unto sin, namely, to the utter ruin and undoing of it. "The Messiah shall be cut off, to finish transgression, and make an end of sins," Dan. ix. 24. There is a double finishing of sin, by consummation, and by consumption. The meaning is not, that Christ completed that which sinners had left imperfect, or varnished over those sins which came out of their hands rude and unpolished; no, he could neither put a hand nor set a tool to such a work as this; but to make an end of sin, to eat into the heart and tear out the bowels of it. Such is Christ's hatred of sin, that rather than it shall live, he himself will die.

7. The last reason I name is that in the text, He suffered and died once, *that he might bring us to God.* This was the comfortable end of his death, Eph. ii. 13. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." The word in the text *ἀποσπασμὸν*, rendered *bring*, properly signifies a manuduction, or leading by the hand. Now, Christ brings sinners to God.

(1.) Meritoriously; while his sufferings are not only a meritorious ransom to redeem us from sin and wrath, but to procure us all graces necessary to bring us to this blessed state.

(2.) Effectively, by applying the virtue and value of his sufferings to us. And so,

[1.] He reconciles sinners to God. Sin has turned us off from God, but this bloody sacrifice brings us nigh to God, Eph. ii. 13. compare ver. 19. Though they were "far off," now they are "made nigh by the blood of Christ;" and are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Thus Col. i. 21. "22. You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh, through death," &c.

[2.] He effectually converts them. He who at first said, when darkness covered the face of the deep, "Let there be light, and there was light;" he who raised a dead Lazarus to life; can with the like facility shine into our hearts, giving us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. *He uttereth his voice, saith David, and the snow melteth;* let him utter his voice, and the rocks and mountains of our corruption will melt away like wax, and we shall be "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," Eph. ii. 10. You know whose expressions these are, Jer. xxxi. 33. "I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Tit. iii. 5. "Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

[3.] He advances their nearness to God, by bringing them into communion with God. He himself being the medium of communication, opens a door of access and success to them. See for this, Heb. x. 19. 20. "Having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh."

I proceed now to the application of this subject.

Use I. shall be of information. Is it so that Christ suffered for sin? Then,

1. This informs us of our miserable state by nature. Who can tell the extent of this misery, to be far from God? We may guess at the breadth and depth of the sore by the plaister that is prepared and applied. If you would view sin in its right features and proportions, take a prospect from mount Calvary, look through the perspective-glass of Christ's sufferings and bloody death, and seriously ponder the bitter and dreadful agonies of the Son of God, when he sweat,



and bled, and groaned, and died under the burden of it. The sufferings of Christ are the best glass to see the dreadful nature and horrid evil of sin.

2. See here and admire the amazing love and goodness of God the Father, that, without any desire or desert on our part, he should give *his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iii. 16. We are many times more apprehensive of the love of the Son, than we are of the love of the Father. I would not do any thing to diminish the love of the Son; God forbid; O, it was wonderful, superlative love! Only I would heighten your ideas of the Father's love in giving Christ, and that to the death for you. The Father had a great hand in it. Therefore it is said, Is. liii. 10. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Job xxxiii. 34. "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." Psal. lxxxix. 19. "I have laid help upon one that is mighty." John iii. 16. forecited. Let angels, and men, and all creatures, adore this love. And Oh that you would return love for love, your drop for God's ocean. We must honour the Son as we honour the Father; and we must love the Father as we love the Son, John v. 23. There was no merit in us to procure the love of the one or the other, but every thing in us was calculated to make God and Christ abhor us: yet behold, God loved us. Oh! let us love him with the most ardent affection, the most seraphic love! Oh! that we could love God, and him only!

3. Hence see and admire also the love, the amazing and transcendent love of Christ, who hath done and suffered so much for us, guilty, vile, and loathsome worms, and that in order to deliver us from misery and wrath. "O the height, depth, length, and

“ breadth of the love of Christ !” Eph. iii. 18. 19. “ it  
“ passeth knowledge.

4. See the efficacy of the death and sufferings of Christ. Though he offered only one sacrifice, yet it was effectual to satisfy divine justice, atone an offended Deity, and be a full price for the debt of elect sinners. The frequent repetition of the legal sacrifices intimated their imperfection; but this one offering was effectual for accomplishing what they could not effect. Let us then trust in this one sacrifice as sufficient to procure our pardon, reconciliation and acceptance with God.

USE II. of examination. How shall we know, may you say, whether or not our Lord has determined our happiness, and prevailed with us to come to God? Try this important question by these signs.

1. Have your eyes been opened to see, and your hearts affected with your damnable state by nature; and has the view and desire of an outgate been reviving to you? Then this speaks good to you.

2. Have you been deeply humbled on account of your distance and alienation from God? Have you been pondering upon that scripture, Hos. xiii. 9. “ O  
“ Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is  
“ thine help?” And hast thou seen that there is no help for thee but in God and Christ, and actually employed him as thy Helper? This is a comfortable token.

3. Try it by the thoughts you have of sin. Have you seen it in its vile, defiling, endangering nature, and your accursed state thereby? and has this excited you to suitable endeavours to get deliverance from it?

4. What impressions have you of the love of the great Deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath borne all your iniquities on the cross? John i. 29. “ Behold  
“ the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of  
“ the world.” The word in the original is *ἀρᾶν*, and signifies both *ferens* and *auferens*, bearing and bearing



away. Both these did the scape-goat under the law, Lev. xvi. 21. 22. The high priest under that dispensation laying the iniquities of the people upon the scape-goat, it bare them upon it, and bare them out of sight, This hath Christ done, Is. liii. 6. "The Lord hath laid  
 "on him the iniquity of us all. 1 Pet. ii. 24. "Who  
 "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the  
 "tree." How vehement will your desires be after Christ! how high will your esteem of him be! Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and  
 "there is none on earth that I desire besides thee."

5. Such are the raised and magnifying views of the Lord Jesus Christ, that are displayed in his sufferings, that they are raised up to solemn and serious thanksgivings, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from  
 "our sins in his own blood,—to him be glory and  
 "dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

USE III. of exhortation. 1. To those who are yet far from God, who are yet in their state of natural enmity and alienation from God. 2. To those who are graciously recovered, and come out of that woful state.

*First*, To you who are strangers and enemies to him.

1. Who can possibly describe your miserable state, being without Christ, aliens from the comonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world? You have no right to any blessings; and the very creatures are at war with you.

2. Consider, the longer you live without God, you are daily departing further from him, and are nearer to destruction. O how dreadful is this!

3. Consider that awful sentence that stands against you, "Cursted is every one that continueth not in all  
 "things which are written in the book of the law to  
 "do them," Gal. iii. 10. "Consider this, ye that  
 "forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there  
 "be none to deliver," Psal. l. 22. Consider it now,

lay it seriously to heart at this moment, for you have no security for another hour.

But I cannot part with you in terms so uncomfortable; and therefore I would invite you to put yourselves in the hands of Christ for deliverance from the curse of the law. Consider,

1. Persons who have been as cursed, black, and hellish as you are, have at this day communion with God; and they got it no other way but by Christ, and that grace that is in him. Therefore come ye also to him, and you shall obtain the same blessing.

2. We have warrant to invite you to come back to Christ; and your invitation is your warrant: Is. xlv.

12. 13. "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness. I bring near my righteousness: it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." "Hearken unto me," says Jehovah; "to whom will you hearken, if you will not do it to me? I have an all-sufficient righteousness, consisting of my Son's active and passive obedience, to give you, for your justification, for delivering you from wrath and condemnation, and pardoning your guilt." Will you then run such a dreadful risk as despise such a merciful and endearing Saviour, who will save you from your sins, and give you a right to eternal life?

3. Your own necessity and need is good warrant for you to come to Christ. Say then with Peter, "To whom shall we go but to thee, for thou hast the words of eternal life?" There is no way of being delivered from moral or penal evils, but by coming to Christ the Saviour.

4. God in Christ is in treating terms with you. The banner of peace is displayed in the gospel, and ambassadors of peace are sent to negotiate a treaty of reconciliation with you: "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God,"



2 Cor. v. 10. We are commanded to invite you to Christ, nay to compel you to come in. Therefore we bespeak and beseech you in the words of the prophet, *Is. i. 18.* "Come now and let us reason together; "saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

5. If you will not come and get an interest in this sacrifice of Christ, then you must fall a sacrifice for your sins to divine justice to all eternity. If you accept not Christ's sacrifice as your propitiation and atonement for sin, there remains no more sacrifice for sin to deliver you; and therefore you must be a sacrifice for it in hell-fire, and that for ever. Therefore labour with all your might to see and mourn for your sin and guilt, to crucify your lusts, and flee to and lay hold upon this blessed propitiation for sin in the blood and death of Christ. Oh! can you hold out any longer, when God presses you so earnestly to take the benefit of this sacrifice? See how Christ wept over Jerusalem, *Matth. xxiii. 37.* O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, "thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" So does he now weep over impenitent sinners. Come to him then as David's servants to Nabal, *1 Sam. xxv. 8.* "Let the young men find favour in thine eyes; for we are come in a good day." This is a day wherein our liberal Lord deals bountifully with his people, his suppliants, with all returning prodigals. Come then and see, come and try, and by faith, and a hearty cordial acceptance of Christ, let us put in for a share, and get an interest in the atoning blood of Jesus. Without blood Christ could not (for ought we know) save you, and without faith the blood of Christ cannot save you: *Rom. iii. 25.* "God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation thro' faith in his blood." *Heb. ix. 14.* "The blood of Christ purges

“ the conscience from dead works.” Acts xv. 9. “ The heart is purified by faith.” This blood must be applied and sprinkled by faith. Every man under the law was to lay his hand on his burnt-offering of atonement, in token of his owning it for his sacrifice, Lev. i. 4. So thou must stretch out an hand of faith, and lay it on the head of thy sin-offering, owning Christ as thy Saviour and sacrifice for sin. “ As Moses in the wilderness lifted up the serpent, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

*Secondly*, I would offer a word of exhortation to those whose hearts the Lord has determined to come back to him through Christ his Son.

1. Comply with the apostle's direction, 2 Pet. i. 10. “ Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.” Be cautious, accurate, and diligent in this matter: take nothing upon trust, but trial. If after you have found upon trial, that your interest in Christ is well grounded, then,

(1.) Give the glory to God. Take up Mary's song, Luke i. 46. 47. 49. “ My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name.”

(2.) Take the comfort to yourself. Formerly ye were enemies to God, but now you are friends, heirs of God, citizens of Zion, members of the household of faith, &c.

(3.) See that you consider what has made the difference, namely, free, rich, and sovereign grace: 1 Tim. i. 14. “ The grace of our Lord has been exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”

2. We obtest and beseech you, that you admire the surpassingly-excellent love of the Lord Jesus. View every thing in him, that it may elevate and raise your hearts towards him. O view the blessed ransom and Ransomer, and those for whom he died. What dis-



criminating love is this, that while others of better natural and acquired gifts are lying yet in sin, ye are redeemed! O will you now admire this love! "Who loved me, and gave himself for me," says Paul, Gal. ii. 20. Here is an ocean of love. The death of Christ was such a demonstration of love as the world never saw. When Christ wept at Lazarus's grave, bystanders made this remark upon it, *Behold, how he loved him!* John xi. 36. But if weeping at the grave for his death argued such love, what love was it to die and go down into the grave for him!

It were an easy thing to lose ourselves in this delightful maze and labyrinth of love: The righteous Judge of all the earth unrighteously accused and condemned, the Lord of life dying, the eternal and ever-blessed Son of God struggling with his Father's wrath; he that said, *I and my Father are one*, crying out in his bitter agony, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* he who hath the keys of hell and death, lying sealed up in another's grave. O transcendent love! Well might the apostle, in an holy rapture and ecstasy, express himself in an elegant contradiction, when he desired the Ephesians to *know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge*, Eph. iii. 19.

3. Here is suitable matter of joy and admiration, Rev. i. 18. Though he was dead, yet now he lives, and that for evermore. Virtually you were conquerors with him, and now he is working in you and for you, till he bring you off the militant stage. Let us parcel out in a few things those grounds of comfort that flow from this fountain of consolation.

Therefore notice here abundant ground of comfort to all those that have by faith fled to, and are interested in Christ crucified. Here is blood that will interpose between you and harm. Christ's treading the wine-press leads you into the wine-cellar. Though to him it was painful, yet to you it is comfortable. Never was there such a cordial for drooping and disconsolate souls as that blood which came from his heart, when his side was breached, and set a-running upon the

cross. Observe this in these four or five particulars.

1<sup>st</sup>, Your enemies are foiled. A believer hath many enemies. This blood of Christ hath either reconciled them, or disarmed them; either made them friends, or left them impotent enemies. I will give you a short list of them.

(1.) The justice of God, that is satisfied. Out of Christ it hath a dreadful quarrel and implacable controversy with sinners. Poor believers are many times afraid, under their misapprehensions, that exact and inexorable justice will either nonsuit or give a verdict against them. But they are more afraid than hurt.

This blood hath made justice their friend, Rom. v. 1.

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God

“through our Lord Jesus Christ.” In Christ, God now

sits with a rainbow about his throne, Rev. iv. 3. God

once drowned the world in wrath; but smelling a

sweet savour of rest from Noah's sacrifice, he purposed

and promised never to do so any more. And as a

badge and token of his favour, and of the firmness of

that covenant of peace, he set his rainbow in the

clouds. If you can upon good grounds say, that

Christ is yours, there is a rainbow about God's throne;

his bench of judicature and condemnation is turned

into a mercy-seat. Justice will set hand and seal to your

acquittance, and be so far from pleading against you,

that it turns your advocate. And Christ having shed

his blood, because God is just, (Rom. iii. 25. 26.), the

believer must be justified.

(2.) The law is fulfilled. To be under the law as a

covenant of works, is a state full of danger and ter-

ror. Saints are many times afraid, that the law will

be put in as a black bill of indictment against them;

but the blood of Christ hath blotted the curse out of

the roll, Gal. iii. 13. “Christ hath redeemed us from

“the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.”

Rom. vi. 14. *You are not under the law;* not under it

as to its invenomed curse, inexorable rigour, and in-

tolerable severity. The law itself to every believer is



as it were nonsuited by the death of the Lawgiver: 1 Tim. i. 9. *The law is not made for a righteous man.* It was given to Adam when he was righteous, and, as the law of Christ, or a rule of life, it strongly obliges such as are righteous; but it *lies not against a righteous man* (so the word signifies) for his condemnation, because it has received all its demands by the obedience and satisfaction of Christ.

(3.) Satan is subdued. Christ's bruised heel hath broken his head, Col. ii. 15. "Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them on his cross." The whole host of hell, with all their cursed train of artillery, was led captive by him on the cross, and dragged at the chariot-wheels of this mighty Conqueror. When the door-posts of the Israelites in Egypt were sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb, the destroying angel passed by them. The blood of Christ sprinkled on the conscience, is a choice antidote and preservative against this devouring Abaddon. Not but that he may be still a tempter and a troubler, but he shall never be a conqueror or tormentor. Christopher Haasse, a Swedish senator, being at the point of death, the devil appeared at his bed-side, says my author, with pen, ink, and paper; "Come," (says he), "reckon up thy sins in order as thou hast committed them, that I may carry them in a catalogue to the tribunal of God, whither thou art going." "Well, Satan," (answered the senator), "if it must be so, let the catalogue be under this head and title, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.*" On this the devil flew away in a great rage. O look and plead for the right art of pleading the blood of Christ. It would make this roaring lion more to tremble, than the lion doth at the cock crowing.

(4.) Sin is abolished; and that is a far worse enemy than the devil. Many a saint is able and apt to say, "Were it not for sin, I would not care much for Satan; I would defy him, and bid him do his worst;

“but it is the devil within that makes the devil with-  
“out so formidable.” Now plead but this blood, and  
the guilt of sin is done away, either as imprinted on  
the person to condemnation, or as reflected on the  
conscience in accusation.

[1.] Sin is done away by this blood, as it binds o-  
ver to wrath and punishment. It cuts off the prison-  
fettlers, Rom. viii. 1. Sin may remain, but it shall  
not condemn. And the apostle shews whence believers  
have their discharge, ver. 3. “God sending his own  
“Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, con-  
“demned sin in the flesh.” If the blood of Christ  
runs through thy soul, thou hast shot the gulf as to  
condemnation. This scripture brings thee in not  
guilty, and that is the verdict of a thousand juries.

[2.] The blood of Christ abolishes sin as reflected  
by the conscience in a way of accusation, raising tu-  
mults and turmoils in the soul, and arming a man a-  
gainst himself. It is a malignant and mischievous pro-  
perty of sin, that it doth not only put the soul into  
hell, but puts hell into the soul. Christ's blood hath  
that virtue in it, which is abundantly sufficient to si-  
lence and stop the mouth of an angry accusing con-  
science. It is a sovereign balsam, to cure that cancer  
in the breast; a mollifying ointment and cooling fo-  
mentation for those invenomed, sin-rankled ulcers  
that fester and bleed inwardly. *The blood of sprinkling  
speaks better things than that of Abel*, Heb. xii. 24.  
Conscience, as a blood-hound, hunted Cain at every  
turn, and its continual cry and echo in his ears was,  
“Vengeance upon the murderer.” But the blood of Je-  
sus hath in it a pleasant and peaceful voice, and hush-  
es all unquiet and tumultuous quarrels. Applied by  
faith, it says to the soul's rolling billows, that cast up  
mire and dirt, what Christ once said to the raging sea,  
*Peace, be still: and there is a great calm.*

(5.) The last enemy, whose enmity the blood of  
Christ hath slain, is death. Not that death is so de-  
stroyed to believers, that they shall not die; but it is



unfingdged, so that it shall not wound in the vital parts, nor at once kill bodies and souls. The apostle's triumphant *exultation* is very remarkable, 1 Cor. xv. 55. 56. 57. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." When a bee hath fastened its sting in a man's flesh, and thereby lost it, it ever after (they say) turns a drone. Death once fastened its sting in Christ, and has ever since, to them that are in Christ, been like a drone, that can affright, but not sting and hurt them. Death now drives a poor trade among them. It may destroy the body; and when it hath played that prank, it has done all its feats. How feeble an enemy is death, since it travelled and took a walk to the top of mount Calvary!

2dly, A believer's enemies are not only foiled, but through the blood of Christ his person is accepted in the beloved, Eph. i. 5. 6. He *hath begreaved us in Christ* (that is the proper import of the word *ἐξαπτόμενος*): *in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* If thou art sprinkled with the blood of Christ, God will know his own mark upon thee; thy person is accepted, and thy services cannot be unacceptable.

3. If thou art a believer, here is comfort, in that thou mayst be assured, that Christ is willing to do any thing for thee. He is ready in heaven upon all occasions to plead this price, and solicit thy further affairs. Shew but Christ's blood, and I dare warrant the golden sceptre shall be held out to thee. The apostle's reasoning is unanswerable, Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how he shall not with him also freely give us all things?" Saints need never fear putting Christ to too much trouble, in any thing they have for him to do. Thou needest not fear his denying any thing to thee, who hath thus far denied himself for thee.

4. Here is comfort to a believer, in that his grace shall be preserved. Such a soul is too costly a purchase for Christ to lose. He paid so dear for it, that he may be trusted to demand no challenge, the making good of his bargain, Phil. i. 6. "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." John x. 11, 28. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands." How little do they consult Christ's honour, or the comfort of souls, who tell us, that believers may perish in sin, like rotten sheep in a ditch? If so, (which is impossible), how then shall Christ save his stake, who hath been thus much out of pocket upon them?

5. Here is further comfort to a believer, in that by the blood of Christ heaven is opened, Heb. x. 19. Man had no sooner sinned, but God sent an angel to stand centinel, and keep him from paradise with a flaming sword. The blood of Christ hath opened that passage, at once blunting the sword, and quenching the flame. Christ gave up the ghost at the ninth hour; at three o'clock after noon, the time of the evening sacrifice: and at the very instant the vail of the temple, which separated the holy place from the most holy, was rent asunder; so that the priest who was then ministering in the holy place, had on a sudden a fair and free prospect into the holiest of all. Which excellently typifies, that the death of Christ hath removed and rent away all obstacles and obstructions that might interpose betwixt believers and the blessedness of glory. If thou open the door of thy heart to Christ, Christ will open and unlock the door of heaven to thee, and thou canst not be shut out.

And now that your joy and comfort may run in a right channel, live by faith. Consider faith's victory over sin. Do not mar your comfort and mercy, by entertaining the cankerworm of sin, that eats up all. Consider faith's victory over the world. Do not live



in the muddy insipid pleasures of time. Whatever your crosses are, the sting and curse is taken out of them.

Finally, study the improvement of Christ. Improve his sufferings, his offices, attributes, &c. Apply his blood; wait upon his ordinances; that the good hand of the Lord being upon you and with you, ye may come and be brought back to God by the blood of this holy and just One.

Further, not only improve Christ for bringing you to God, but also for keeping you with him. And be continually employed in seeking further nearness to him, especially in the ordinance of the supper.

Lastly, Study faith's entire acquiescence in Christ. Comply with his invitation in coming to God by him. O then what a heaven would you have upon earth, and what a joyful prospect of being ever with the Lord Jesus to behold his glory!

"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

## DISCOURSE IV.

### Christ precious unto Believers \*

I PETER ii. 7.

*Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.*

**I**T infinitely surmounts the capacity of men or angels, to describe the matchless excellencies and unparalleled dignity of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom all perfections and excellencies do illustriously concenter. Yet he is and will be the main study and admiration of the believing soul; for he is such a soul's beloved, *altogether lovely*. Indeed we read of a great commendation given to Absalom for his lovely features, 2 Sam. xiv. 25. *In all Israel, says the historian, there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.* This encomium may be far more truly applied to Christ, who is a mirror of beauty. I remember, that Nicephorus, in his ecclesiastical history, tells us of one Abgarus king of Edessa, who hearing much of Christ's fame, by reason of the miracles that he wrought, sent a limner to draw his picture; but that when the artist came, he was not able to do it, because of the divine radiancy and splendor that shone in Christ's face †.

\* This discourse, consisting of more sermons than one, was preached at Lunan, in the author's younger years.

† It may not be improper to observe, that this story is probably a fiction, though of great antiquity; and deserves as little credit as the letters which are said to have passed between this Abgarus and our blessed Saviour. As many have heard of these letters, but few perhaps have seen them, a copy of them is here annexed.

Moses Choronensis thus relates the story. Abgarus having sent three of his courtiers to wait on Marinus the Roman president of Phoenicia, Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia, they on their return went up to Jerusalem, to see Christ, induced thereto by the fame of his



Whether this story be true or not, I leave it to the author. But without controversy there is such a resplendent radiancy on Christ glorified, as none can conceive. He is *ὁ αὐτὸς ἁπλοῦς*, all made up of beauties and excellencies. Our praises fall short of his dignity, and are like spreading canvas upon cloth of gold. All the perfections and excellencies that are scattered thro' heaven and earth, are epitomized in him. How precious is his person, being God and man! How precious is his blood! it pacifies an angry God, and cleanses from all sin. O how precious is he! he is the map of perfection, the paradise of delight, and the crown and

wonderful works, and reported to their master some of his miracles which they had been eye-witnesses of. Abgarus, amazed at such a surprising account, professed faith in Christ as the Son of God, saying, "These are the effects of the power of God, and not of man; for no man can raise the dead but God only." Labouring at the same time under an inveterate disease, he sent our Lord the following letter.

*ABGAR the son of Arstam, the governor of the country, to THE MOST BENEFICENT SAVIOUR, who hath appeared in the region belonging to Jerusalem, sending greeting.*

I Have been informed of thee, and of the cures which are performed by thee without medicines or roots. For, as it is reported, thou makest the blind to see, and the lame to walk; thou cleansest the lepers; castest out unclean spirits and daemons; healest all that are tormented with chronical distempers; and raisest the dead. Now, when I heard all this of thee, I determined in my own mind one of these two things, either that thou art a God come down from heaven to do this, or else that thou art the Son of God, and so dost it. For this cause it is therefore that I have written to thee, to pray thee that thou wilt not disdain to come to me, and cure the distemper with which I am afflicted. Moreover, I have heard that the Jews also greatly murmur at thee, and have a mind to evilly entreat thee. Now I have a small but beautiful city; and it will suffice us both.

The messengers being introduced to Jesus, then at Jerusalem, by Andrew and Philip, he did not grant the king's request, but sent him the following letter, which was wrote by Thomas one of his disciples.

Blessed be he who believes in me, when he hath not seen me. For it is written of me thus, "that those who see me should not believe in me; and that those who should not see me, shall believe and live." But as to what thou hast written to me, that I would come to thee; it is fit for me to perform here all that for which I was sent to Jeru-

marrow of the gospel, the glory of heaven, being the light thereof, Rev. xxi. 23. the admiration of angels, and the envy of devils.

Indeed I do not wonder, though Paul, that seraphic saint, who was rapt up into the third heavens, (2 Cor. xii. 4.), and heard *unspeakable words*, or, as it is in the original, *ῥηματα ἀρρητα*, *wordless words*, or such as could not be expressed by man; I say, I do not wonder though he desired to know nothing among the Corinthians save Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 2. No wonder though the apostles left all and followed him, Matth. xix. 27. for he is the fountain of all happiness, joy, and consolation to his people. Well may they say, as the martyr said of old, "None but Christ, none but Christ:" and as Ruth said to Naomi, Ruth i. 16. 17. *Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God, &c.*

Peter, the inspired penman of this epistle, and minister of the circumcision, having in this chapter dehorted the believing Jews to whom he writes from several vices and enormities which were and are inconsistent with a state of grace, and exhorted them to the practice of several necessary and important duties,

salem. When I shall have finished that, then I shall ascend up to him that sent me: and after I shall have ascended up, I will send from hence one of my disciples, who shall cure thy distemper, and shall freely give life to thee and thine.

The story further adds, that Abgar's messengers returned to him with the letter, and a picture of our Saviour; and that, after Christ's ascension, Thomas the apostle sent Thaddeus, one of the seventy disciples, to Edessa, to cure Abgar, and to preach the gospel to him and his people; and that Thaddeus having done so, was happily successful in making many converts from Heathenism to the Christian faith, in that city and country.

These letters are also to be found in Eusebius's church-history. The arguments in support of their authenticity may be seen in Whiston's Collection of authentic records belonging to the Old and New Testament, part 2. p. 1096. &c. and reasons proving them to be an ancient forgery, in Dupin's history of the ecclesiastical writers, vol. 4. p. 31. 32. Dub. edit. 1723.



and shewed the peculiar excellency of Christ with respect to God, and his usefulness to men who improve him and believe in him, comes in this verse to draw the conclusion with respect both to believers and unbelievers; and shews what he is to the one and to the other: To the former he is *precious*; to the latter, viz. *the disobedient*, or, as the original signifies, *the unpersuadable, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence*.

It is the first clause of the verse, from which I am to speak; *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious*. In which words you may notice,

1. The person spoken of in the demonstrative pronoun *he*, viz. the blessed Jesus, whom the Father hath laid in Zion for a foundation of salvation to all that believe in him, to deliver them from shame and confusion. This is clear from the words immediately preceding the text, *Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth shall not be confounded*. These words are a citation from Is. xxviii. 16. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste*. It is also clear from other parallel places of scripture; as Eph. ii. 20. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone*. Rom. ix. ult. *Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed*.

2. The quality of this person, or what is affirmed of him, namely, that he is *precious*, or, as it is in the original, τιμή, *an honour*; implying, that as Christ is honourable and precious in his Father's account, being his darling Son, the Son of his bosom, and precious and honourable in himself; he is so also in believers esteem and eye; he is their glory, their honour, their King, in a word, their all, Col. iii. 11.

The word τιμή may be considered either, (1.) As opposed to shame. This is very agreeable to the context; and so the sense is, *To you that believe Christ,*

instead of being a shame, shall be *an honour*. Or, (2.) As opposed to a thing or person of no worth or excellency: so the meaning is, Christ, instead of being worthless, is exceeding precious. Or, (3.) It may be the abstract for the concrete, *honour* instead of *honourable*. Some orthodox commentators are of opinion, that *τιμή* here is put for *ἐστίμη*. None of their glosses being inconsistent with the text or context, we shall exclude none of them. For *τιμή* here may very well be translated (by way of analogy) *precious*, seeing things which have honour are desirable and precious. So our translators have put the one in the text, and the other in the margin. Christ is an *honour* and *precious* to them that believe in him. And the translation is not to be receded from, without a sufficient ground.

3. A description of the persons to whom Christ is precious, *You that believe*. Faith is not here to be taken in the exact philosophical notion of it, as implying no more than an act of the understanding, assenting to the truth of a proposition; but in its gospel-acceptation; and so the meaning is, "You that assent to the truth of the gospel cordially, and that with particular application and appropriation; you who by faith settle upon Christ as the sure foundation of your salvation, and so rest upon him for all, being persuaded that there is no salvation in any other," Acts iv. 12. John vi. 68.

Faith is held out in scripture under several notions and designations, as coming unto Christ, looking to him, laying hold on the covenant, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, receiving of him, opening the door to him, believing in him, as in the text. All which expressions come to the same purpose, and are set down for our better conceiving the nature of faith.

4. The connection of the verse with the preceding, in the illative particle *therefore*; as if the apostle had said, "Because Christ is precious and honourable in



“ his Father’s account, being the chief corner-stone,  
 “ whom he hath laid in Zion for a foundation of sal-  
 “ vation to all and every one that believe in him,  
 “ so he is to you, whatever maltreatment he meet with  
 “ from unbelievers.”

From the words thus explained, several doctrines might be observed, but I shall only take notice of one, as the foundation of our ensuing discourse, viz.

*DOCT. Whatever Christ is or may be to Jews or Gentiles that do not believe, yet this is certain, that to them who believe in him, he is precious, and an honour.*

This doctrine is abundantly plain from the text, as also from several other places of scripture, as particularly, Psal. lxxiii. 25. “ Whom have I in heaven  
 “ but thee? and there is none upon earth that I de-  
 “ sire besides thee.” Phil. iii. 8. “ Yea doubtless, and  
 “ I count all things but loss for the excellency of the  
 “ knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; — that I may  
 “ win Christ, and be found in him,” &c. Christ was and is so much in the church’s esteem, that he is styled her Beloved, no less than twenty times in the book of the Song of Solomon. I might direct you to more scriptures; but by the mouth of so many witnesses you may be confirmed in the truth of the proposition.

In prosecuting this doctrine, we shall (through divine assistance) do the following things.

I. Premise a few things for the better understanding of the nature of faith.

II. Shew what is implied in believing.

III. Endeavour to make it appear, that Christ is an honour to them that believe in him.

IV. Shew what is imported in the phrase, *Unto you that believe he is precious.*

V. In what respects Christ is precious to the believer.

VI. Subjoin a few reasons of the doctrine; or shew why it is that Christ is so precious to believers.

VII. Lastly, Make improvement of the whole in some practical uses.

I. I am to premise some things for opening up the nature of faith.

1. Faith may be considered as human or divine. Human faith is that which is founded upon a human testimony; but divine faith is founded on a divine testimony.

2. Divine faith may be considered four ways.

(1.) As consistent with saving faith, but not saving, or essential to it. Such a faith is that of miracles; and it is twofold. [1.] Active, which consists in a certain persuasion of a person's ability with respect to his performing a miraculous work, as for instance, Matth. xvii. 20. 1 Cor. xiii. 2. Or, [2.] Passive, which consists in a person's persuasion of a miracle to be wrought upon him, or toward him. Such a faith had that sick man you read of, Matth. viii. 2. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

(2.) Divine faith may be considered as altogether inconsistent with saving faith; and it is called *temporary* faith, and lies in a certain embracing of the known truths of the gospel, yea even with some sort of joy and external fruit, but does not endure, Matth. xiii. 20. 21. *But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself; but endureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.* Compare this with Heb. vi. 4. 5. 6. This temporary faith differs from saving faith in its principle, in its particular acts, in its effects, and in its duration and perseverance.

(3.) Divine faith may be considered as that which is not only consistent with saving faith, but essential to it, and yet not formally saving, but only as a part of



its essence. This is called *historical* faith: the denomination not being taken from its object, but from the way and manner how it is exercised about its object; and it consists in believing the word of God to be true historically, whether in whole or in part. Thus Agrippa believed the prophets, Acts xxvi. 27. thus the devils are said to *believe and tremble*, Jam. ii. 19. yea thus they believe four grand articles of our creed, Matth. viii. 29. *What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*

(4.) Divine faith may be considered as saving only; and it is called *the faith of God's elect*, or faith unto salvation, viz. that faith which, according to God's method of grace and divine institution, has a connection with salvation and eternal life; and this connection flows not from any intrinsic worth in the grace of faith whereby it would merit salvation; for then faith would be a work, and not a grace properly; and consequently we would not be saved by grace, but by works; which is directly contrary to the apostle's arguing, Eph. ii. 8. *By grace are ye saved*. Yet there is a greater aptitude in the grace of faith to save, than any other grace; seeing it is a Christ-exalting and self-abasing grace, and consists in a soul's flight to Christ for life and salvation, according to God's method of grace. And this is the faith or believing spoken of in our text.

Time will not allow me to describe faith in its causes, subject, object, effects, and opposites, as I am chiefly to speak to the four last heads in the method; and I am the more easy in this matter, as I have spoken at some considerable length to the nature, &c. of this grace, from another text of scripture.

I shall only give you a brief description of faith in its habit and acts. In its habit it may be thus defined. A gracious power in the soul of the elect wrought by the Spirit (through the means of ordinances of God's appointment), whereby the truths of God are belie-

ved, and Christ and the promises of the new covenant are embraced and applied, according to the eternal covenant of grace, for the salvation of the poor sinner.

Now, faith in its acts is the exercise of this power upon its proper object.

II. I am to shew what is implied in believing.

Here there are some direct acts that are simply and absolutely necessary to the being and essence of faith which is saving: though they be not alike distinct and full in all, yet they must be in a competent measure. And there is a reflex act, or knowing that we have the direct acts, commonly called by divines the faith of assurance, which is not simply and absolutely necessary to the being of faith, but to a complete and full faith, and for the comfort of the believer: and it is every one's duty to have no less in their aim and design; for though it be a rare attainment, yet it is attainable, and such as will fully compensate the believer's fatigue and toil when attained.

Here we shall not be positive about the priority or posteriority of the acts of faith in order of nature, or the number of the acts, it being hard to determine in such a great mystery. For though there be no subject in divinity more commonly treated of, yet none is more difficult to determine; and orthodox divines are not agreed among themselves; the difference, however, seems rather to lie in words, than in the nature of the thing. Believing implies,

1. Knowledge of the revealed truths of God, especially of those that are absolutely necessary to be known in order to salvation. So essential is knowledge to faith, that it is put for faith itself, John xvii. 3. *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* 11. *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.*

2. The assent of the understanding to the whole re-



vealed truths of God, and particularly to God's record concerning his Son Jesus Christ, in his person, natures, offices, work, purchase, and promises. Truth is the object of the understanding. Papists go thus far in the point of faith, and make the very formal nature of it to lie in assent; but assent is not enough, for the devils believe and tremble, Jam. ii. 19.

3. Consent, which brings in the heart and will, and looks at the goodness of the truth and person, Rom. x. 9. 10. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.* So that in believing there must be heart-believing, and not head and understanding only.

4. A soul's flight to Christ, as to an only and sure city of refuge, that the person may be delivered from the avenger of blood, renouncing all his own righteousness in point of justification before God, Is. lxiv. 6. *All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, &c.* and taking sanctuary under the covert of the Mediator's wings, his blood, righteousness, and merit, that he may be freed from condemnation, and may have a sure title unto eternal life, Phil. iii. 9.

5. The soul's being actually determined to receive Christ in the gospel offer, John i. 12. And here the very formal nature of believing lies, according to our Confession of Faith. They that receive Christ in the gospel offer, receive a whole Christ in all his offices.

6. An assurance, confidence, or trust, Eph. i. 12. *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.* And this may be termed a consequential act of faith; and it formally lies in an act of trust and dependence on Christ, and the promises as yea and amen in him.

7. Lastly, A knowledge of our believing. This is termed a reflex act of faith, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know in whom I have believed.* And this knowledge is accompanied with a great deal of quietness of mind and joy of soul, attended with much complacency and delight in the

object, whereof there is much spoken in the Canticles. And as this is a rare attainment, so it is not always permanent: for those that have it in a plerophory or full degree, may soon have it eclipsed, when God withdraws the sensible manifestations of his favour. However, it is what all of us ought to study, it being a duty commanded.

III. Our next head is, to make it appear that Christ is an honour to them that believe.

This will appear, if we will consider,

1. That Christ is advanced to the highest honour and dignity for his people; he has entered into glory, and that for them, Heb. vi. 20. *Whither the forerunner is for us entered.*

2. That he will bring his people to glory and honour at the end, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. *The Lord will give grace and glory.* Mal. iii. 17. *They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.*

3. In respect of the near relation they stand in to him. By their relation to him they come to be,

(1.) Of the blood-royal of heaven, to be partakers of a divine nature, to be one with him. Such a wonderful union will never be fully understood, while we are here on earth. They have him for their elder brother, Heb. ii. 11. *He is not ashamed to call them brethren.* Any person reckons it a great honour to be related to an earthly king. O then how unspeakably great an honour are they advanced unto, who are related to him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, the Prince of the kings of the earth!

(2.) By this relation they have honourable company, communion and fellowship with God in Christ, by the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, 2 Cor. vi. 16. *Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

(3.) By this relation they have honourable attendants, even the holy angels, Heb. i. 14. *Are they not all*



*ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

(4.) By this relation they have honourable entertainment; *a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined, II. xxv. 6.*

(5.) They have honourable cloathing, Phil. iii. 9. *May be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* Their cloathing is Christ's righteousness, which sufficiently answers all the commands and demands of a broken covenant of works, all the accusations of Satan, and all the challenges of their own consciences, Rom. viii. 1. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*

So that, from these and other considerations that might be named, it is abundantly plain, that glorious Christ is an honour to them that believe in him. Yea, this honour is so great, that it will take up eternity to admire it; for it cannot be told. *Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared for them that love him.*

IV. I proceed to shew what is imported in the phrase, *Unto you that believe he is precious.* It imports,

1. A discovery of the matchless worth and excellency of Christ. The believer sees Christ to be (as he is) *altogether lovely*, Cant. v. ult. He sees him to be *full of grace and truth*, John i. 14. How amiable soever an object be in itself, yet if it be not discovered to a person, it will never appear so to him as it is. The believer by faith gets a discovery of the matchless excellencies that are in Christ, and these make him precious to him. This discovery is not equal in all believers, neither in the same believer at all times; for sometimes grace may be under an eclipse: neither has any a perfect discovery of them while here, for that is reserved for Immanuel's land, 1 John iii. 2, "Now

"are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

2. A comparing all other things with him, and preferring him in their esteem to them all; as the spouse did, Cant. v. 10. *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.* Psal. lxxiii. 25. Phil. iii. 8. both forecited. Hence it is that believers have parted with all things for Christ, to shew the great esteem they had for him. As that poor woman who had born a considerable number of children, said, she would bear them ten thousand times over for Christ. Moreover, they have been made sacrifices to dreadful flames, and suffered the most intolerable torments, for Christ their beloved. The believer will rather chuse to die with Christ in a prison, than to be advanced to the highest pitch of honour and dignity that any mortal is capable of; like Moses, who *chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,* Heb. xi. 25.

3. That the believing soul is inflamed and transported with love unto Christ. The person cannot make language of it to the world. For grace is a thing that is better felt, than can be expressed by the most charming rhetoric of men or angels; and none can conceive so well of it as those who know it effectively and experimentally upon their souls. The spouse, when she wanted words to express her towering thoughts of the incomparable perfections and supereminent excellencies of her beloved, broke forth into that pathetic and compendious expression, *Yea he is altogether lovely,* Cant. v. 16.

V. I come now to shew in what respects Christ is precious to the believer.

*First,* More generally, Christ is very precious, always precious, altogether precious to the believer. He is precious in all that he has done and suffered;



and how can it otherwise be? How superlatively and inconceivably precious would that person be unto a condemned criminal, that had transgressed the royal law of his sovereign, and by so doing incurred the threatening thereof, who should, when the criminal had nothing in view but the sword of justice to be inevitably and immediately sheathed in his bowels; interpose for him, and procure him a pardon or reprieve, at no less expence than the effusion of his heart's blood, by substituting himself in his room and place! But this is scarce to be conceived or expected among men. Yet our blessed Redeemer, when all mankind were ruined to all intents and purposes by breaking the covenant of works in their federal head, and the sword of divine justice was ready to be plunged into their bowels, became sponsor for a select number of them, such as were given to him of the Father in the covenant of grace, whom he did specifically and formally represent, and substitute himself in their law room and place, by undertaking to fulfil all the commands and demands of the broken covenant of works for them. This accordingly he did in the fulness of time, and thereby *finished transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness*, Dan. ix. 24. He is now become *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*, Rom. x. 4. and *there is now no condemnation to them which are in him*, Rom. viii. 1. No wonder then that Christ be precious to the believer, seeing he has done and suffered so much for him, and entitled his ransomed ones to a better happiness than what they lost in Adam by the breach of the covenant of works. For if people are once enstated in the new covenant in and by Christ, they are alway so. I mean those that internally and really are so, and not by profession only.

Secondly, and more particularly,

1. Christ is precious to the believer in the glory of his person. Never did such a person appear in the world as Jesus Christ. He is really God, and truly and

properly man. The divine and human nature never before met hypostatically in any person beside Christ, Heb. i. 3. *He is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person.* John x. 30. *I and my Father are one.* He is co-equal and co-essential with God. He is the head of principalities and powers, Col. ii. 10. The highest and most glorious of the angels compared to Christ, are but sullied creatures. He excels them infinitely more than they do the meanest of men.

2. He is precious in his natures, divine and human.

(1.) He is precious in his human nature. When the believer takes a view of him, and sees him to be bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, (Heb. ii. 16. *Verily he took not upon him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham,* that he might be capable to suffer all things for him that he deserved by the breach of the covenant of works, for without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin); O how precious must he be to him in this respect!

(2.) He is precious in respect of his divine nature, upon many accounts; particularly in that it supported the human nature in suffering; for the human nature would never have been able to have borne the wrath of God, without the aid of the divine: this would have been an insupportable burden to the very angels; yea, it would have been enough to depress the whole creation to the lowest pit. And as the divine nature supported the human nature in its sufferings, so it added virtue and merit to its temporary sufferings, so that they are a proper compensation to law and justice for the sins of men. No wonder then that Christ be thus precious to believers, when they win by faith to take a look of God, who once banished man from his presence, and guarded the entrance to the tree of life by a flaming sword to prevent his access thereto, yet devising a method to restore his banished home again. To see the two natures that were once at variance, now reconciled in Christ, is and will be the admiration



of angels, and of the nations of them that are saved, through the endless ages of eternity.

3. Christ is precious to the believer in his names. There are so many splendid jewels hung upon his crown. He is called *the desire of all nations*, Hag. ii. 7. He is called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace," H. ix. 6. O what a cluster of glorious and supereminent titles is here! He is called the Father's delight, H. xlii. 1. "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth." He is called the Father's fellow, Zech. xiii. 7. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow." He is styled the head of the church, Eph. v. 22. Yea, he will be the Judge of quick and dead, Acts x. 42. I might mention many more glorious names of Christ, all calculated to enhance the believer's esteem of him.

May we not then say with the spouse, Cant. i. 3. "Thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee?" O, if I could open this odoriferous box to you to purpose, so as ye might fall in love with this precious Redeemer. It is said, that when the woman in the gospel had poured her box of ointment upon the head of Christ, the whole house was filled with the odour of it, John xii. 13. The Lord Christ is unspeakably sweet and pleasant in himself, and precious to every saint, whether ye take it of the saints triumphant, or of those who are yet in a militant state. As for the former, see how they adore him, Rev. v. 8. 9. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." And as to the latter, they esteem him precious; they glory and triumph in him; they venture their whole salvation upon him; they disesteem all other things in comparison of him. See how the church speaks of him, Cant. v. 10. "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand," or,

as it is in the original, "the Standard-bearer among  
"ten thousand." The standard is a warlike ensign;  
and he who bare the standard in ancient times, was  
the most eminent person in the army. So Christ much  
more eminently is styled *the Standard-bearer*; for ga-  
thering the people to him, agreeably to Is. xi. 10.  
"He shall stand for an ensign of the people."

4. Christ is precious in respect of those things to  
which the scripture resembles him.

(1.) He is resembled to a rose, Cant. ii. 1. *I am the  
rose of Sharon.* The rose, saith one, is the queen of  
flowers. It is most delicious for colour and scent. And  
so sweet is this rose, Christ, that he makes us to God  
a sweet-smelling savour, Eph. i. 6. O carry this rose  
in your bosoms, yea, in your hearts.

(2.) He is resembled to a vine, John xv. 1. The  
vine (as Pliny saith) is the noblest of plants; so is  
Christ. O what lovely and delicious clusters grow  
upon the vine Christ! such as the fruits of justification,  
adoption, sanctification, &c. Hos. xiv. 8. *From him is  
our fruit found.*

(3.) He is resembled to a corner-stone, 1 Pet. ii. 6.  
compared with Isaiah xxviii. 16. and that in two re-  
spects. [1.] The whole weight of the building lies  
upon the corner-stone. So the weight of our salvation  
lies upon Christ; 1 Cor. iii. 11. "For other founda-  
"tion can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus  
"Christ." [2.] The corner-stone unites and knits  
together both parts of the building. So when God  
and man were at variance, Christ, as the corner-stone,  
did unite them together, and cement them with his  
own blood. O how precious is this matchless stone,  
that was hewn out of the mountain without hands!  
Dan. ii. 45.

(4.) Christ is compared to a rock, 1 Cor. x. 3. *That  
Rock was Christ.* He is compared to a rock in a three-  
fold sense. [1.] He is a rock for offence. The rock  
breaks the waves. The church being built upon Christ  
the Rock of ages, all the adversaries that come against



her, are like a ship coming full sail against a rock, that dashes her in pieces. [2.] Christ is a rock for defence. The dove hides itself in the rock, Cant. ii. 14. *O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock.* Christ's wounds are the clefts of the rock, where the believing soul, this dove, hides itself. [3.] Christ is a rock for comfort. 1. (To screen from the heat, Is. xxxii. 2. *A shadow of a great rock in a weary land.* He shades a poor sinner from the scorching heat of God's wrath. 2.) Honey came out of the rock, li. xxxii. 13. *He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock.* So the believer sucks the honey of grace and consolation out of Christ, in whom all fulness dwells. O Sirs, build upon this rock, else it will fall on you, and grind you to powder, Luke xx. 18.

(5.) Christ is compared to a rich treasure. Riches are lovely in some mens eyes; so is this treasure to a believer. Eph. iii. 8. we read of *the unspeakable riches of Christ.* The angels can never dig to the bottom of this golden mine. Solomon says, Eccl. x. 19. *Money answereth all things;* that is, it buyeth all things that are vendible, meat, cloaths, lands, &c. So Christ answereth all things. He is meat to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, cloathing to the naked, medicine to the sick; he that has him inherits all things, &c.

(6.) Christ is compared to a beautiful robe, Is. lxi. 10. *He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.* Christ's righteousness is a lovely robe. There is no embroidery or ermine that kings wear, so lovely as this robe. In it we shine as angels in God's eyes. *O put on therefore the Lord Jesus Christ,* Rom. xiii. 14.

5. Christ is precious in his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. He is King and Lord paramount, Rev. xix. 16. *He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.* He has his regalia; such as a royal crown, Rev. xix. 12. a royal sword, Psal. xlv. 6. that will either cure or kill; a royal sceptre, whereby he rules and governs his people;

he can subdue hearts to himself, which is beyond the power of the petty kings of the world to do. As a Priest, how precious is Christ to believers! He has satisfied divine justice for them; and he ever lives to make intercession for them, and apply to them the benefits of his purchase, Heb. vii. 25. As a Prophet he reveals the will of God to them, having been in his counsel from all eternity. Yea he is such a Prophet as can perfectly teach his church; he opens their understanding to understand the scriptures, and teaches as never man taught. Others may preach and speak to the ear, but he to the heart. He has his chair in heaven that teaches hearts on earth.

6. He is precious to believers in his covenant, that is *well ordered in all things and sure*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Their title therein is not suspended upon a condition to be performed by man in his own strength, as it was in the covenant of works; but properly and strictly speaking, it is suspended upon a condition already performed, *viz.* the righteousness and satisfaction of Christ, taking *condition* in a juridical sense, for that which is fundamental of their right, and pleadable for it by virtue of paction; and faith is the mean and instrument (as divines speak) whereby they apprehend the same, and are interested in it, as freely promised.

Yet this is not to supersede the diligence of any in the use of all appointed means; for it is in the use of means that God is to be found; for though means be not the cause of obtaining salvation, yet they are the way to it. And they make a wrong improvement of the freedom of grace, who turn it into licentiousness: for we *do not make void the law through faith*, as the apostle says; and whoever do so, it is a plain evidence, that they are strangers to it; for the believer is not freed from the law as a rule of life and manners; no, but only from it as a covenant of works.

7. Christ is precious in the gracious and free promises of the covenant. There is no duty incumbent on the believer, but he has promised strength to per-



form the same. He has promised the first grace, and all after grace; Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 27. "A new heart also  
 " will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within  
 " you; and I will take away the stony heart out of  
 " your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.  
 " And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you  
 " to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judge-  
 " ments, and do them." Yet all these are promised  
 in the use of means, ver. 37. "Thus saith the Lord  
 " God, I will yet for all this be inquired of by the  
 " house of Israel, to do it for them." For though  
 there be not an infallible connection betwixt the means  
 and the end, as Arminians would have it; yet there  
 is a connection of divine appointment betwixt the first  
 grace and all after grace: for they that have the first  
 grace, may assure themselves that they shall receive  
 all after grace, and in the end be put in possession of  
 unspeakable glory, which is grace in perfection. And  
 this is and should be a strong encouragement to the  
 diligent performance of all commanded duties.

3. Christ is precious in his ordinances. For exam-  
 ple, his word is precious, yea exceeding precious to  
 all those that have tasted any sweetness in it. How  
 precious was it to David! Psal. cxix. 72. "The law  
 " of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of  
 " gold and silver." — How precious are sabbath-days  
 to those that know how much of heaven is to be found  
 in them! Certainly a sabbath-day of grace for our  
 souls, wherein we may make provision for them for  
 eternity, should be a very precious day; days where-  
 in our Lord Jesus communicates much of himself,  
 and of the sweetness of communion with him, to  
 those who diligently wait upon him, must be very pre-  
 cious. O then make the sabbath your delight and re-  
 joicing. See that sweet scripture, Is. lviii. 13. 14. "If  
 " thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from do-  
 " ing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sab-  
 " bath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable,  
 " and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways,

“nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Consider the prerogative of this day above other days. As, (1.) On this day the light was created, and the angels of light also, as the ancients say. (2.) Israel went through the Red sea on this day. (3.) On this day God fed them with manna. (4.) On this day the star appeared to the wisemen. (5.) On this day Christ fed five thousand people with five loaves. (6.) Christ himself was baptized on this day. (7.) Christ rose from the dead upon it. O then prepare for this day always before it come. No work either natural or artificial but requires preparation. O pray to the only Preparer of hearts, (Prov. xvi. 1.) that he may tune your harps (your hearts) for Zion’s songs and sabbath-services, that you may make melody therewith and therein to the Lord, Eph. v. 19. Long after it as a day of desires to your souls. The preface, *Remember*, spreads itself over all the duties of the sabbath, before, in, and after. O then prepare for it. Rise early, as Israel did in the siege of Jericho upon the sabbath-day, Josh. vi. 15. Have not you the strong holds of sin (as they had the walls of Jericho) to batter down? O then say with David, Psal. lxxxiv. 2. *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.* And when you are seated in his house and presence, carry yourselves as becomes the servants of a holy God, and plead you may be in the Spirit, Rev. i. 10. and taste how good the Lord is, Psal. xxxiv. 8. And how precious is the Lord’s supper, which is the last legacy he left his disciples (reserving his best wine till the last) before his bloody death! This is an inestimable evidence of his love and favour to all his redeemed. David could not express his favour to Mephibosheth in a better way than to make him eat and drink with him at his table, 2 Sam. ix. 5. 7. It



was an high honour to Chimham also to be admitted to David's table, 2 Sam. xix. Yet an higher favour have all the saints, Luke xxii. 30. The King of heaven admits them to his table, Cant. i. 12. It is a feast of fat things, Is. xxv. 6. a magnificent and royal feast; Matth. xxii. 4. a feast above that of Belhazzar's, Dan. v. 1. made to a thousand of his lords, this is to all poor Jew and Gentile sinners, Acts x. 34. 35; yea, above that of Ahasuerus, Esth. i. 3. 4. and that of Solomon, 2 Chron. vii. 8.

This feast as it is a standing evidence both of the Father's love and of the Son's, so also it is a fore-taste and prelibation of heaven to all true believers; and therefore it is dangerous to rush upon this ordinance without preparation. Therefore casuists say, *Sacramentum et articulus mortis aequiparantur*, That a man should be as serious in his coming to and sitting at the table of the Lord, as if he was at the point of death. A man should come to every ordinance, but especially to this, as Behemoth to Jordan, Job xl. 23. with a mighty and an all-exhausting thirst upon them. O then, if there be any here that have gotten at any time a glance of the King in his beauty, then register every act of his love; *remember his love more than wine*, Cant. i. 4. You are *vas signatum*; say with Nehemiah, chap. vi. 12. *Shall such a man as I sin, or desert my God?*

9. Christ is precious in his prerogatives. He and he only is the Saviour of the world, and besides him there is none else; Acts iv. 12. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved;" that is, there is nothing that can be named, for it is an Hebraism. He had no coadjutor or helper in the work of our redemption, Is. lxiii. 3. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." As he is the only Saviour, so he is the only Mediator: "For there is one God, and one Mediator betwixt God and men,

“the man Jesus Christ,” 1 Tim. ii. 5. He is the only head of his church, Eph. i. 22. He only hath the supremacy and authority, as being omnipotent and omnipresent; one that is able to protect and defend his people from all injuries; one that is able to prevent and baffle all the plots and projects that are hatched and invented against them.

10. He is precious to believers in all his relations; as a Leader, to lead them through all the melancholy and difficult steps they have to tread before they arrive in Immanule’s land. —As a Physician who effectually cures all their wounds by a most sovereign and costly remedy, even his own blood, 1 Pet. i. 18. Exod. xv. 26. He is *Jehovah Rophi*, the Lord that heals them. —As a Head, from whom they receive all vital influences and gracious communications, that keep their souls in life, and inspire them with strength for work and warfare. *From him is our fruit found*, Hof. xiv. 8. —As a Friend, sympathizing with them in all their troubles; when other friends leave them, he will stick closer than a brother. —As an Advocate to plead your cause, 1 John ii. i. There is no cause which he takes in hand that he loses. —As a Father he will make them heirs of an incorruptible crown, a crown of life and glory. He hath fatherly pity and compassion towards them; and when they go out of the way, he will not let them want fatherly correction, Psal. lxxxix. 31. 32. —He is precious as a Husband, H. liv. 5. *Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name.* O that many would match with him here this day! Consider, O every man and woman that hears me, that Christ is of noble extraction; he is the Ancient of days; he will never die from you, he lives for evermore, and he will never leave you nor forsake you, Heb. xiii. 5. He will suffer none to do you wrong; yea, he will reprove kings for your sakes. O then come and be espoused to this Prince of the kings of the earth. All things are ready, come to the marriage; and your Maker will be your Husband.



11. Christ is precious in the purchase of his blood. For example, (1.) The redemption that he has wrought for us by his blood, is a precious redemption. It is a redemption from sin, Satan, death, and hell, Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (2.) The donation or bestowing of the Spirit is his purchase and gift, John xiv. 26. "The Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." O what a precious and invaluable gift is it to have the Spirit of God given us, to quicken us to duty, to draw us to Christ, and to carry on the work of grace in the soul? &c. (3.) The graces of the Spirit, which likewise are purchased by him, are precious. So faith is called precious, 2 Pet. i. 2. Gospel-repentance is a precious grace, because it is unto life, Acts xi. 18. And hope is precious, which is the anchor of the soul, Heb. vi. 18. And love is a precious grace; it brings the soul into near fellowship with God. Wisdom is a shining grace, Eccl. viii. 1. Job speaking of it, says it is invaluable, *Man knoweth not the price thereof*, chap. xxviii. 13. Humility is an honourable grace, fear a preserving grace, patience a supporting grace, and perseverance a crowning grace. All these are precious, and the purchase of Christ. (4.) The privileges that we have by Christ are precious; union and communion with him, conformity to him in his life, death, and resurrection; access to God thro' him, &c. (5.) The inheritance that he hath purchased for us, is precious, incorruptible, and undefiled, and fades not away, reserved in heaven for us.

12. Lastly, Such is the preciousness of Christ, that compare him with the most precious things that can be named or thought upon, and he excells them all. For instance, (1.) The souls of men and women are said to be (as truly they are) precious. But O how infinitely more precious is Christ? (2.) Light is said to

be precious; and Christ said of himself, *I am the light of the world*, John viii. 12. 3. Truth is precious; so precious, that we are to buy it at any rate, and to sell it at no rate. Now, says Christ, *I am the truth*, John xiv. 6. Fountains and springs of water are precious, especially in hot and dry countries. The Lord Jesus Christ is *a well of salvation*, Is. xlii. 3.; *a fountain opened for purgation*, Zech. xiii. 1. Bread is precious to those that are ready to perish, and a man will venture his life for it, when he is ready to starve with hunger: "We get our bread with the peril of our lives," Lam. v. 9. Now Jesus Christ is *the bread of life*, which whosoever eats, shall never perish. And what shall I say more? Time and strength would fail me to hold forth this doctrine fully to you. Christ is the very abstract and epitome of all perfections; all the creatures in heaven and earth do contribute all their excellencies to set forth his excellency and glory.

Thus you see it is evident that Christ is precious to the believer, and likewise wherein he is so.

VI. I shall next give the reasons of the doctrine; or shew why Christ is so precious to believers.

1. Because they see the indispensable need they have of him, that without him they are lost, dead, and must perish for ever. Faith is a Christ-exalting and self-debasing grace; therefore believers prize him; they see they cannot live without him; they know that a poor condemned criminal stands in no more need of a pardon, or a beggar ready to starve in the streets has no more need of meat, or a naked man of a cloathing, than they of Christ; nor a sick man of a physician, than they do of the Physician of souls.

2. Because they see an inconceivable beauty in him. It is true indeed, to unbelievers Christ hath no beauty in him, that they should desire him, Is. liii. 2. A carnal, earthly-minded man says concerning Christ as they did, Cant. v. 9. "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" "This is the stone that was set at



"nought by you builders, Acts iv. 11. A believer sees Christ afar off, as it is said of Abraham, John viii. 56. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." Hence it is that believing in Christ is sometimes expressed by seeing Christ, Acts xxii. 14. Ananias speaking to Paul said, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that just One, and shouldst hear his voice."

3. Because they receive very rich and invaluable benefits from him. As, (1.) They receive many temporal mercies from him. All their temporal mercies come streaming to them from Christ. He is the heir of all things, and all things are theirs by him, 1 Cor. iii. 22. (2.) They receive many spiritual mercies from Christ, precious privileges, graces, and comforts, as justification, adoption, sanctification, &c. All their springs are in him.

4. Because they expect much from him. As they have much in hand, so they have more in hope. What do they expect from him? No less than a crown and kingdom; an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; to triumph with him in glory; to sound forth Hallelujahs of praise to him that sitteth on the throne for ever and ever.

5. Because of that near and dear union that is betwixt Christ and them. They are united to him by faith. Faith, you must know, is an uniting grace; it is an espousing grace that makes up a match betwixt Christ and the poor man, Eph. iii. 17. Now believers being united and espoused to Christ, cannot but dearly love and highly esteem him. As a woman that hath placed her affections upon one man among a thousand for her husband, forsakes all others, and cleaves to the guide of her youth, loves, obeys, and highly esteems him. Thus, when the soul is joined and married to the Lord, it cannot fail, it cannot miss but dearly love, admire, and esteem Christ, as one altogether lovely and precious.

I come now to make some practical improvement of this subject.

USE 1. Is it so, that Christ is precious to believers? then this shews us, that the people of God are the only happy people in the world. For if Christ be precious to them, so they are precious to him. As he is high in their account, so are they in his. He takes all the wrongs that are done to them, as done to himself. And no wonder; for they are his jewels, his pleasant portion, his diadem, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation; so dear to him, that he has graven them on the palms of his hands, and cannot want them out of his sight; he is so mindful of them, that he has left them the memorials of his love to feast upon, till he come again for them, as he has promised, John xiv. 3.

2. This doctrine may inform us of the glorious excellencies of Christ. He is in scripture compared to all things that are pleasant and delightful: and one great piece of the study of Christians in this life, is to search into the excellence of Christ; in doing whereof there is abundance both of pleasure and profit, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 8. 9.

3. Hence we may learn what a blessed condition they are in, who have got the Lord Jesus Christ into their hearts. If the Lord has bestowed this precious gift, Christ, on thee, it is more than if he had given thee the world. O rejoice in thy portion; for as soon as thou art a believer, thy heart is made a cabinet for this inestimable jewel; there Christ dwells, Eph. iii.

17. 4. Faith is an exceeding rich and precious grace. It is called *precious faith*, 2 Pet. i. 1. But why is faith so precious a grace? Why, because it makes Christ so precious to our souls. It makes a man look upon Christ with an admiring eye; it ravishes the soul with the love of its precious Redeemer, and makes him cry out with rapture, There is no beloved like my beloved. O the dignity of his person! O the



virtue of his blood! O the value of his sufferings! O the sweetness of his grace! O the comforts of his Spirit! O the excellency of those glorious hopes that are laid up in him! You read of Moses, that he despised all the treasures of Egypt. Why? because by faith he beheld him that is invisible, Heb. xi. 26. 27. By the eye of faith he looked upon Christ, and saw more beauty and glory in one smile of his face, than in all the pomp and grandeur of the crown of Egypt.

5. Then certainly unbelief is a most dangerous, damnable, and soul-destroying sin. Why? because it makes Christ to be of no worth or esteem to sinners, and keeps them still in darkness. "To you that believe Christ is precious:" but, says the apostle in the next verse, "To you which be disobedient," that is, to them that do not believe, "he is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." An unbeliever would sell Christ for thirty pieces of silver, as Judas the traitor did. Of all sins, beware of unbelief; for this is the evil heart that causes to depart from the living God, Heb. iii. 12. The unbelieving heart causes the soul depart from God still, if continued in, till it hear that dreadful word, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." As faith is the first return of the soul to God, so unbelief is the first departing of it from God. Take heed and beware then of unbelief.

6. If Christ be so precious to the believer now, how exceeding precious will he be to him, when he shall see him face to face, when faith will be swallowed up in vision, and hope in fruition? Abraham saw Christ afar off: he saw him two thousand years before he was incarnate, John viii. 56. If he saw him at such a distance, and was glad, O how does Abraham rejoice now, when he sees him face to face? O will you long and look for that day: then he will be inconceivably precious, and that to all eternity. This beatific vision is what Christ hath promised, yea what he hath pray-

ed for, John xvii. 24. *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.*

The second use shall be of exhortation.

1. Bless God for this precious gift, Christ. Had he not dearly loved you, he would not have sent him to seek and save you; neither would he have made the scales fall off your eyes, and enlightened you to see his radiant beauty. O let the high praises of God be in your mouths. He had given you nothing, if he had not given you Christ; and now you have Christ, he will deny you nothing you ask of him in Christ's name. The apostle argues strongly, Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Let not a day pass over your heads without praising God for Jesus Christ.

2. Is Christ so precious in his person as God-man? then learn to honour him, admire, and adore him, Psal. xlv. 11. John v. 23. Therefore kiss the Son with a kiss of love, reverence, and obedience.

3. Is he precious in his titles, offices, &c.? then delight in him, and improve him in all these; so shall he be more and more precious to you every day.

4. Is Christ so precious? O then let me obtest and beseech you in the bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, to prize him, as ever ye would evidence yourselves to be true believers, and members of his mystical body. Let him be highest in your esteem, and exalted above all in your regard. Remember that word of his, Luke xiv. 26. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." These words must not be understood simply, as if our Saviour would have us hate our parents and relations. Certainly that is not the meaning of the words, that he would have us to violate the law of nature. It is therefore spoken comparatively: He that does not love me so much, as



to hate all others in comparison of me; he that does not prize me before father or mother, &c. and all things that are desirable, such an one hath not interest in me, and shall have no benefit by me.

Now, because this is an exhortation of such infinite concernment, we shall divide it into three branches. I shall,

1. Shew you the manner how you should prize Christ.

2. Give some motives to persuade to it.

3. Conclude with a few means which may help you to it.

*First*, As to the manner of this duty,

1. Prize him in your understanding, desiring to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 7. 8.

2. In your choice. Pitch upon him as the only adequate satisfying object of your souls. As a woman that singles out one man among all the rest, on whom she places her affections as a husband; so do ye chuse Christ for your Lord, and say, with the psalmist, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee," Psal. lxxiii. 25.

3. In your affections. Love him above all. Labour to be, as the spouse was, Cant. ii. 5, *sick of love*. O that ye were all bedfast of this disease, saying as David did in that mournful elegy which he made for Saul and Jonathan. Speaking of the latter, he says, 2 Sam. i. 26, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." Let your love flow out to him in all the ardour of desire and affection. Trust in him as the Rock of your salvation; trust to his wisdom to lead you, in his power to support you, in his mercy and merit to save you, Rejoice in him as Mary did, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," Luke i. 46. 47.

4. In his ordinances and word. Say, "O Lord,

“how sweet is thy word that brings me the good and  
“glad tidings of a Saviour!” The word of God is as  
a letter sent from a dear husband to his beloved spouse.  
O delight in reading and hearing his word read. It had  
this effect on the two disciples: “Did not our hearts  
“burn within us,” say they, “while he talked with  
“us by the way, and while he opened to us the scrip-  
“tures?” Luke xxiv. 32. How stand your hearts af-  
fected when you read and hear his word? Are they like  
the tender heart of Josiah, that melted at the hearing of  
the law? 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27. So also prize him in  
the sacraments. There, by an eye of faith, you may see  
him bleeding and pouring out his soul an offering for  
sin; there you may hear him crying, and see him dying  
for your sakes. In a word, see that you esteem com-  
munion with him better than all the company and  
pleasures in the world.

*Secondly*, I shall suggest motives to persuade you to  
this duty; and O that I knew and could lay before you  
what might raise your esteem of Christ!

1. Will either worth, beauty, or excellency, or  
sweetness, or soul-satisfaction, win upon your hearts?  
All these are to be found eminently in the Lord Jesus.  
He is an all sufficient Saviour; for justification, his  
blood can wash away and pardon all your sins; for  
sanctification, his blood can purify and cleanse you; for  
redemption, his blood can deliver you from the wrath  
to come. Consider what he is in himself, in his per-  
son, in his natures, in his offices, titles, prerogatives,  
relations, &c. which I gave you a hint of in the doc-  
trinal part, and be induced to prize and esteem him in  
respect of them all.

2. Consider, that Christ is the only desirable good.  
The common wish and voice of the world is, *Who will  
shew us any good*, any temporal good? Psal. iv. 6. But  
why don't ye say, *Who will shew us Christ*, who is  
the all-sufficient, soul-satisfying good and portion?  
Assure yourselves, that nothing under heaven can do  
you good without him, and nothing can be good if



you want him. What are riches, honours, pleasures, &c. without him? Mere nothings, very vanity. God is a consuming fire without Christ: for Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: and God is well pleased with him, and with every one that cometh to him; but his wrath flames against every one that doth not believe in him. Pray tell me then, O sinners, what are you to do? Are you content to perish for ever in your sins? Are you content, that the curses and threatenings of the law, these treasures of wrath, should be your portion? Are you content to be banished from the presence of God to that blackness of darkness for ever? Jude ver. 12. I know that as creatures, endued with a principle of self-preservation, ye are not. O then why do you not prize and esteem Christ as precious, by whom alone it is that ye can escape eternal wrath? H. lv. 2. "Why do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" Why do ye trifle away your time in seeking after vanities, and in the mean time neglect him who only can give you remission of sin, a right to the promises, reconciliation with God, and eternal salvation?

3. Consider how infinitely precious Christ is to the Father. O what great account does he make of him! He is the Son of his bosom, of his love and delight, John i. 18. Prov. viii. 30. See the public testimony which the Father gave of him at his baptism, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matth. iii. 17. And will ye not prize him, be well pleased with him, and make him the sole object of your highest love and warmest desire?

4. Consider how precious he is to the angels. The angelical host did him honour at his birth, Luke ii. 14. They tuned their harps, and sang with a loud voice, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." As God hath commanded them to worship him, Heb. i. 6. so they do continually. And will you not then esteem him, who partakes of

your nature, and has done so much for your salvation.

5. Consider that he is precious in the esteem of the saints, both those in heaven and those on the earth. The former are continually employed in trumpeting forth his praise; and the latter glory and exult in him, disregarding all other things in comparison of him, Phil. iii. 7. 8. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things  
" but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus  
" Christ my Lord;—and do count them but dung, that  
" I may win Christ." The word *σκύβαλα*, rendered *dung*, signifies dogs meat, such things as we cast to dogs. If there had been presented to Paul a whole mountain of gold and silver, and precious rubies and pearls, in comparison of Christ it would have been but as a heap of dung, garbage, and dogs meat to him, unworthy of his notice or regard. "But what things  
" were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." What things he did undervalue, and who undervalued them, he tells you in ver. 5. & 6. "Circumcised the  
" eighth day." He was outwardly in covenant with God, bearing the seal of God's covenant in his flesh; yet this was nothing in his esteem. Further, he was  
" of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an  
" Hebrew of the Hebrews," of the family of Abraham. This was his birth-privilege; but this was nothing in his eyes. He was also also a man of parts and learning, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a learned Jewish doctor. He had great natural abilities, and those improved by learning. And he was one of a civil and unblameable conversation; "touching the  
" righteousness which is in the law, blameless," as to his outward deportment. Yet all these he counted but loss to win Christ, and be found in him, clothed with his righteousness. And then consider who it was that undervalued these things. It was Paul, a scholar, a man of parts and great erudition, a native of no mean city, but of Tarsus in Cilicia, Acts xxi. 39. It was Paul that was not a novice in religion, one that knew



not what he said, but Paul the aged, who was well experienced in the ways of Christ. It was this great man that passed this account on all these things and privileges in comparison of the adorable Jesus. O how exceeding precious was Christ to Paul the believer! And so precious ought he be to every one of you who have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

6. Consider what account sinners will make of him at last. Even they that now slight him, who prefer every base lust and carnal delight before him, O what account would they make of one smile of his countenance in that awful day, when he shall mount his dreadful tribunal, and all nations shall be assembled before him! O how will they then cry! but though they will then seek his blessing with tears, yet those Esaus will not get it. O prize and esteem Christ now, as ye would expect to stand with comfort before him in the day of judgement. How stand your hearts now affected to Christ! If such arguments will not prevail with you to esteem Christ now, for my part I am out of hopes to prevail with you at all. O that God may make them effectual to beget love in you to the lovely Jesus, that you may henceforth esteem him above all things!

*Thirdly*, I shall say before you some means to help you to this important duty.

1. The soul must be convinced of the indispensable need it hath of Christ. It is necessity that does enhance the prize; for till the soul be convinced of this, all the arguments and motives we can use will prove vain. But when a soul comes to this, "Either I must have Christ, or perish for ever," Christ is then precious indeed to it. If ever therefore you would attain to esteem Christ precious, be much in the duty of self-examination. Turn your eyes inward, to see the vileness of your natures, the sinfulness of your hearts, and the manifold transgressions of your lives. Reason thus with thy own soul: "What am I by nature but a child of wrath, an heir of hell, under the

“curse? The number of my sins is greater than the  
“hairs on my head. My heart fails me at the remem-  
“brance of them, and one of my sins is enough to  
“sink me to the lowest hell, being committed against  
“an infinite Majesty; and therefore it deserves infi-  
“nite punishment. God’s justice must have an infi-  
“nite satisfaction, and there is no satisfaction can be  
“given to God without blood, Heb. ix. 22. for with-  
“out shedding of blood there is no remission; and no  
“blood can expiate sin, but that which is of an infi-  
“nite value; and this is only the blood of Christ.  
“Therefore I must have this blood sprinkled on my  
“soul, in order to my salvation.” Consider there-  
fore the need ye have of him.

2. The soul must take a humbling view of all its  
sins. Let the remembrance of these be as bitter to you  
as gall and wormwood. O labour to say feelingly, *It*  
*is an evil thing and bitter, that I have forsaken the Lord my*  
*God, and that his fear is not in me,* Jer. ii. 19. Mourn  
for the offence you have done to Christ, as a man  
*mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness for it, as*  
*one that is in bitterness for his first born,* who is the  
image of the Father’s person, and as it were the prop  
of his family. Take it for a rule, They that slight  
their sin, will quickly slight a Saviour: but when sin  
is bitter and a burthen to the soul, there Christ will  
be very sweet and precious. O then take such a view  
of your sins, as will melt your hearts, and make you  
prize Christ, who only can save you from them.

3. Get your hearts loosed from an inordinate love  
to and concern for the world. Set your feet on it,  
trample it under foot, and place your heart and af-  
fection on Christ.

4. Study much the excellency and beauty of Christ,  
as I have described it before.

5. Beg earnestly that God would open your eyes to  
see more of his beauty. Say, “Lord, shew me thy  
“glory, and it sufficeth: how sweet will one glimpse of  
“thy countenance be to my soul!” I may say to you



as Christ said to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 10.  
“ If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that  
“ saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have  
“ asked of him, and he would have given thee living  
“ water.” If you did but know Christ, you would  
open your hearts to him, and invite him as Laban did  
Eliezer, Abraham’s servant, Gen. xxiv. 31. “ Come  
“ in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest  
“ thou without?” Come in and take possession of  
my heart, and dwell enthroned there for evermore.  
**Amen.**

## DISCOURSE V.

### The Nature and Excellency of Christ's Testament \*

MARK xiv. 24.

*And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.*

I Suppose there are few or none in all this auditory but know, that it is very usual among men, in contemplation of their death, to dispose of their goods and affairs, declaring their will and ordering their effects, concerning their friends, as shall be most for their comfort, support, and happiness. Christ will not be behind-hand with the most loving father, husband, or friend. For the like concern, love, and care we find in our blessed Redeemer towards his spouse, children, and friends, far transcending any instance of this nature we can read or hear of among men. You will find him, upon the narrative of his dying, plainly declaring his will in all things that might concern his disciples and followers.

And I suppose you will easily apprehend, that we cannot entertain you with a more necessary and delightful subject, in view of the solemn ordinance of our Lord's supper, than to open up and apply to you our dying Lord's testament. Wherefore I shall not stay any longer in prefacing. I am hopeful, there are few or none here, but will be glad to be informed of the nature of this testament, and to know if their names be in it: and therefore I have chosen this scripture for that purpose, and to help you forward in your work: "And he said unto them, This is my

\* This sermon was preached immediately before the administration of the Lord's supper, at Marytown, Oct. 17. 1731.



"blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." See Matth. xxvi. 28, where the like words occur; and Luke xxii. 20. "This cup is then ew testament  
"in my blood, which is shed for you."

In the context we find, that, immediately after the celebration of the passover, our Lord institutes this his holy supper. In which institution we have observable, the author, the time, the elements, and ministerial actions.

1. The author of this new sacrament: *Jesus took bread.* It is the sole prerogative of Jesus Christ to institute a sacrament. The church has no power to do it, or to make new sacraments. It is only the duty of the church to celebrate those our Saviour has appointed.

2. The time of the institution; the night before his passion; "The night in which he was betrayed  
"Jesus took bread." It is worthy of our observation, that it is necessary, when sufferings appear, especially when death approaches, to have recourse to the table of the Lord, which affords an antidote against fear, and is a restorative to our faith.

3. The sacramental elements, *bread and wine*; bread representing the body, and wine the blood of our dear Redeemer.

4. The ministerial actions; the breaking of the bread, and the blessing of the cup. As to the bread, *Jesus took it*, that is, set it apart from common use, and separated it for holy ends and purposes; and *blessed it*, that is, prayed for a blessing upon it; and *broke it*, thereby shadowing forth his body broken upon the cross: and he gave it to his disciples, saying, This broken bread signifies my body, suddenly to be broken upon the cross, for the redemption and salvation of a lost world. *Do this in remembrance of me.* As to the cup, Christ having set it apart by prayer and thanksgiving, he commands his disciples all to drink of it; and accordingly they did so. And our Saviour gives his reasons for it, "For this is my blood of the

"new testament, which is shed for the remission of sins," Matth. xxvi. 28. Luke xxii. 20. that is, the wine in this cup represents the shedding of my blood, by which the new covenant is ratified and confirmed.

The words are a proposition, containing, as all propositions do, two parts.

1. The subject, or thing spoken of; and that is the blood of Christ.

2. A predicate, or what is said of it; It is the blood of the new testament, shed for many. Where observe,

(1.) A specification of the covenant or testament which this blood of Christ seals: It is a *new testament*.

(2.) The ordination or disposition of his blood; it was *shed*: so it came to be the ground of the new testament.

(3.) The persons for whom it was shed; *for many*, for all believers.

The doctrine I observe from the words is as follows.

*Doctr. The Lord's supper hath a special respect to the new testament of Christ, which was ratified by the shedding of his blood.*

In opening and improving of this doctrine, there are several things to be explained.

I. A testament.

II. A new testament.

III. This new testament as founded on Christ's blood.

IV. The respect which the Lord's supper has to this new testament.

V. Reasons why the covenant is called a new testament.

VI. The excellency of Christ's testament above all others; or wherein it differs from other testaments.

VII. Improve the whole in a few practical uses.



I. A testament. The new covenant hath the notion of a testament. It is not only a covenant, but *testamentum, a testament.*

*First,* In the general, a testament is a man's last will about the disposing of those goods which he leaves at his death, and what things he would have done after it.

And so Christ's testament is the voluntary and free disposition of the dying Mediator's goods, to be possessed by the heirs of promise. Or, it is the declaration of his will, before his death, concerning his children and friends and goods, how they should be disposed of after his death. Now, it is a covenant with respect to the manner of agreement, a testament with respect to the manner of confirming it, by the testator's death.

God has in all ages delighted in this way of transaction, that he might mix his sovereignty with love and sweetness, and that this solemn obligation might be an help to faith and obedience, as being an indenture solemnly drawn up, and agreed betwixt God and us.

As it is a testament, it respects the death of Christ, by which it is ratified: *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all, whilst the testator liveth, Heb. ix. 16. 17.* Men that make a will in their life-time, have a power to change and alter it at their pleasure. This way by the civilians is called *voluntas ambulatoria*. But when a man is once dead, the inheritance is so alienated and transmitted to others, that it cannot be reversed; but the heir may challenge his right, and the will must be put in execution. So here, by the death of Christ, the new covenant is made firm, valid, and effectual, without which neither we nor the fathers under the law could be saved by it: for God never intended to give remission of sins and eternal life, which he promises in the new covenant, but for and in con-

sideration of Christ's death. How much of free grace shines forth in this dispensation!

*Secondly*, In particular, in the new covenant all the solemnities required in the framing and confirming of a testament concur in the testament of Christ. For,

1. There is a testator; and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, disposing of his affairs in contemplation of his death, who died to make way for the confirming thereof, and to make it irrevocable. Our Lord Jesus Christ had a full right and power over those things he disposed of, as the heir of all things, Heb. i. 2. and in virtue of his purchase, according to the compact and agreement between the Father and him, which is set down, Is. liii. 10. 11. *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities.* By the covenant between the Father and the Son, Christ was bound to lay down his life, as an offering for sin, and then the Father would make him a fountain of grace, light, life, and peace to poor sinners.

The death of Christ comes under a twofold notion and consideration, according to the twofold relation which he sustaineth, as an act of a mediator or testator: Consider God's transaction with us as a covenant, so he is a mediator; as a testament, so he is the testator, making over his riches or goods to his friends, warning, instructing, exhorting, comforting, and strengthening them for all things they were to meet with after his departure from them, John xii. 33. xiii. 1. 2. — 31. 33. xiv. 1. 2. 3. 18. 25. 26. 28. 30. xvi. 1. — 6. & xvii. 11. Matth. xxvi. 29. You may read these passages, and there you will see that Christ, upon the narrative of his dying, plainly and kindly declares his will in all things that might concern his people after his death.

2. Here is an instrument, a writing or deed of con-



veyance, disposed into the form of a testament, written and sealed for the comfort, assurance, and benefit of the heirs of promise: and they are the scriptures, which, by the general and universal consent of all the Christian world, are called *the Old and New Testament*, because therein Christ has disposed and bequeathed what he hath purchased for us. To these writings we must have recourse, as the ground of our hope, right, and claim.

All the books written since Christ's coming in the flesh bear this title in the front, *Kalvin Aurburn, The New Testament*; and the whole drift of these books is, to set down the death of Christ as a testator, and to seal up the inheritance of eternal life to every believer, as the child of God and heir of Christ.

Now, this gospel-covenant or testament of our Lord Jesus is ordered not unlike the making of a man's testament.

(1.) In regard of the time and way of making it plain.

(2.) In regard of the time and way of making it public.

(1.) Christ makes a testament in contemplation of his death, long before he died. And this was the declaration of his will under the first administration of the covenant, which is called the *Old Testament*, or the first testament that he made. But when the time of his death draws near, he renews his testament, and makes a second declaration of his will, much more plain and full than the former, which was in types, Heb. x. 1. *the law being a shadow of good things to come*; although without altering the substance of it. And this is the declaration of his will that he made under the new or second testament, 2 Cor. iii. 15.—18. “But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the  
“vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall  
“turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now  
“the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the  
“Lord is, there is liberty. But we all with open

“ face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,  
 “ are changed into the same image, from glory to  
 “ glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Pet.  
 i. 19. “ We have also a more sure word of prophecy;  
 “ whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto  
 “ a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day  
 “ dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.”  
 2 Cor. iv. 6. “ For God who commanded the light  
 “ to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,  
 “ to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of  
 “ God, in the face of Jesus Christ.”

(2.) These testaments, both the old and new, but especially the first, were sealed and kept close like a man's testament till the time of Christ's death, inso-much that his friends, to whom he had left of his goods in his latter-will, and who had desires to know his will, were in great measure ignorant of it, as may be gathered from Matth. xiii. 17. John xiii. 7. & 36. They were, I say, ignorant of this, till after the testator's death, that his testament was opened, and his will publicly declared, Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 8. Col. i. 26. Eph. iii. 9. &c. Rev. v. 4. 5.

3. There are notaries that record the testament; and they are prophets and apostles, who by the Spirit indited and drew up this testament. Therefore it is said, Heb. i. 1. “ God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers “ by the prophets.” Eph. ii. 20. “ Ye are built upon “ the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus “ Christ himself being the chief corner-stone:” that is, Christ is laid and placed as the foundation of our comfort and hope, in the doctrines and writings of the prophets and apostles. They committed to writing such truths concerning him as are necessary to salvation, Heb. iii. 4. 5. 6. that is, that they might draw up Christ's testament.

4. There are legacies left us by our Lord Jesus Christ in this blessed testament. Rich legacies are bequeathed here to Christ's friends; and they must



needs be rich, since he is appointed *beir of all things*, Heb. i. 2.

These legacies are of four sorts.

(1.) Christ hath bequeathed to his friends his real estate or unmoveable goods; and that is the everlasting inheritance, 1 Pet. i. 4. Heb. ix. 15. John xvii. 24.

(2.) Christ hath bequeathed unto us with the inheritance all things thereto belonging; and whatsoever might make us meet to be partakers of this inheritance, Col. i. 12. Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Such as, [1.] Knowledge of gospel-mysteries, John xv. 15. *For all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you*, Matth. xiii. 11. John xvii. 6. 8. [2.] Spiritual life even in this world, Psal. xxii. 26. *Your heart shall live for ever*. John xiv. 19. *Because I live, ye shall live also*. [3.] Remission and pardon of sins, Matth. xxvi. 28. & ix. 2. This is a great legacy which Christ has left to his redeemed people, when he made the covenant. It was sin that plunged us into mischief, cut us off from the favour of God, and debarred us from communion with and the enjoyment of him; therefore this is what was in Christ's eye, to obtain the pardon of sins, Eph. i. 7. [4.] Divine conduct, to be guided into all truth, John xv. 13. [5.] Faith and perseverance in a believing state, John vi. 37. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me," Luke xxii. 32. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." In a word, all the essentials of salvation, as the pertinents of the inheritance.

(3.) Christ hath entitled us to his personal estate, or his moveable goods; that is, unto all things pertaining to this life, so far as they are fit for us, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Psal. xxxiv. 10. If. xxxiii. 16. "Bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure."

(4.) Christ hath left us in his testament such love-tokens as dying men use to leave to their beloved friends; and by this I understand all the comfortable things which believers are entitled unto, and which make their way through the wilderness pleasant unto them:

such as peace with God, which is one of his legacies to his friends, John xiv. 27. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."—Familiarity with him, John xv. 15. "For all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you."—Spiritual joy, John xvi. 21. "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice: and your joy no man taketh from you."—Hearing of prayers, John xiv. 13. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." John xv. 16. "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he will give it you." How well are the lines fallen to believers! and how great and precious things are they entitled unto! Psal. xxxi. 19. "O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!" 2 Pet. i. 3. 4. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature."

5. There are terms according to which these legacies are to be enjoyed. The new covenant is so a testament, that it still remains a covenant, copulatively, not privatively; a testamentary covenant; while it provideth for our comfort and safety, it doth not abolish our duty. It requireth something from us, as well as bestoweth something upon us. *Etiam hereditates habent sua onera*, &c. Men may put conditions into their wills and testaments; therefore the sacramental form doth not disannul our obligation. The conditions are faith, repentance, and new obedience. Faith, Rom. iii. 25. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."—Repentance, Acts iii. 19. "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."—New obedience, Heb. v.



9. "He became the author of eternal salvation unto  
"all them that obey him."

Only I must give you this caution, that all things  
required of us as conditions and duties, are also dispo-  
sed as legacies in the covenant, Jer. xxiv. 7. "I will  
"give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord,  
"and they shall be my people, and I will be their  
"God; for they shall return unto me with their  
"whole heart." So Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 27. "A new  
"heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I  
"put within you, and I will take away the stony  
"heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart  
"of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and  
"cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep  
"my judgements, and do them." Zech. xii. 10. "I  
"will pour upon the house of David, and upon the  
"inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of  
"supplications, and they shall look upon me whom  
"they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him,  
"as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in  
"bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his  
"first-born." This is the proper intent of a testament,  
that certain unspeakable bequests are designed unto us  
antecedently to all conditions performed by us; as  
Christ giveth himself to us bestowing the first grace.  
Conditions of the covenant are conditions in the cove-  
nant. God doth not only bestow, but give them.  
The articles are promises, Heb. viii. 10. "This is the  
"covenant that I will make with the house of Israel  
"after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws  
"into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and  
"I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a  
"people." Not only privileges, but qualifications.  
He requireth them so as we may be sensible of our ob-  
ligation, and acknowledge our duty, so as to strive to  
do our utmost in the use of means, and turn those  
precepts into prayers, and it is our act at last; and  
some of these we must find in us before we can take  
comfort; what he requireth, he promiseth to bestow,

6. There is in Christ's testament a designation of the heirs and legataries, who shall enjoy these precious legacies and this vast inheritance: for here the same persons are both heirs and legataries, Gal. iii. 29. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Rom. viii. 17. "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." The blessing of Christ's testament is no common thing, cast abroad at random. There are certain persons to whom it doth belong, others to whom not. None are described by name, but by character; which is as good as if they were described by name; and which character must be interpreted exclusively. Compare John xvii. 19. with 20. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Christ hath left nothing to the world in this testament, but all believers are comprized. As to the wicked, there is not only a preterition, but a positive exclusion. A preterition is a sufficient bar against any man's testament, because he is not named in the will, nor designed to any favour by it. But the carnal and wicked are excluded, Psal. l. 16. "But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?" Acts viii. 21. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter."

But let us see how the heirs of promise are described.

1. Sometimes by God's election, and the appointment of God, who in his unchangeable counsel designeth the heirs of promise, John vi. 37. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Chap. xiii. 18. "I know whom I have chosen." Luke xii. 32. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

2. They are described to be such as have fled by



faith to Christ for refuge, Heb. vi. 18. who being chased by the terrors of the law, as the man-slayer was, do take sanctuary at the Lord's grace in Christ, and are resolved to continue there, waiting for his mercy unto eternal life.

3. Sometimes they are designed by his owning them as his, and calling them by his grace effectually from among the rest of the world. Hence it is said, John xiii. 1. "Jesus having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." Chap. xv. 19. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world loveth you not." Chap. xvii. 8. 12. "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name; those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition: that the scripture might be fulfilled." Heb. ix. 15. "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." H. lvi. 4. They are such as "keep his sabbaths, chuse the things that please him, and take hold of his covenant."

4. They are described by their dedication to Christ, as those Macedonians who gave their own selves to the Lord, 2 Cor. viii. 5. And 1 Cor. iii. 23. *Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's*. As Jesus Christ gave up himself to God in the work of sinners salvation, so they give themselves to Christ, to be his only, wholly, and for ever.

5. Sometimes they are described by their privileges, such as their adoption and sonship, their friendship, and intimate acquaintance with Christ, their receipt of the Spirit, and such like; as appears from the follow-

ing passages, Rom. viii. 15. 16. 17. Gal. iii. 29. John xv. 15. 16. & xiv. 17.

6. Sometimes by their external lot in the world, from their being afflicted, hated, and persecuted by the world, John xv. 19. & xvi. 2. 20.

7. From and by their sanctification, Acts xx. 32. & xxvi. 18. such as are washed from their sins by the blood of the Testator, John xiii. 8. 1 Cor. vi. 11.

Now, some of these descriptions agree to the lowest degree of grace, others include a more perfect measure. Let not poor sinners think themselves excluded from the testament of Christ, if they have not such a measure of grace as others. If they cannot make out their title by their holiness, they should by their brokenness of heart; if not by the bold challenge of faith, yet by their humble plea. There are fathers, young men, and babes in Christ; and even babes have their share in Christ's testament, 1 John ii. 12. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake." The qualification is sometimes laid down to suit with the strongest, tallest Christian, sometimes with the weakest, because Christ's testament was intended for the use of little children, as well as for fathers and young men. If you run for refuge, if you receive Christ as offered in the gospel, if you resolve to please God, and to take hold of his covenant, these are the characters of the heirs of promise. But,

7. There are seals to this testament, which are the sacraments. This sacrament is a sealing sign, appointed by God to make us truly and really sure of our right to Christ's death and shed blood, and all the benefits purchased thereby. These ordinances excite our faith by the eye, to mind and regard the grace contained in the testament itself.

8. There are witnesses of this testament. The witnesses from heaven, 1 John v. 7. the blessed Trinity, that Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, in whom all our confidence should be placed,



and on whom we should leave the weight of our souls. God seeketh no farther amends for all our wrongs, nor other price for what we need. The Father, Word, and Spirit witness this. The Father by an audible voice from heaven, when Christ was baptized, Matth. iii. 17. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* This testimony was given very solemnly in a great congregation of people, and divinely with great glory and majesty. It was again renewed before Peter, James, and John, at Christ's transfiguration, Matth. xvii. 5. Upon which Peter pleads the truth of the gospel covenant, 2 Pet. i. 16. 17. that God approved Christ, and the work he was going about. The Word gave testimony to this, not by naked affirmations, but in his doctrine and miracles, that he that believeth in him shall be saved. He hath expressed his Father's mind to the world, and his own office in fulfilling it, that there should be no doubt of it. The Holy Spirit witnessed also at his baptism, resurrection, ascension, at the effusion or descent upon the apostles, that still the world hath fuller confirmation, Acts v. 32. "And we are his witnesses of these things," and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

2. The witnesses on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, these agree in one: they are not one, as the former were, 1 John v. 8. This is internal, ver. 10. The work of regeneration of the soul, by the power of the word and Spirit, is signified by water; the work of justification of guilty souls, by the blood of Jesus Christ; and the testimony of the Spirit bearing witness to our spirits, is an assured testimony, that Jesus Christ, in whom we believe, is the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The changing, pacifying, converting, and comforting of souls, crieth aloud, that Jesus Christ in whom we believe, is the true and living God, whom to know, believe in, and adore, is eternal life. The great work of applying all the privileges of the saints, and making

them actual partakers of the blessings of Christ's death, is committed to the Holy Ghost. All agree in this, that Jesus Christ is a sure refuge for sinners; that what was without us is now within us, transcribed by the Spirit of grace on our hearts.

9. There is an executor left in Christ's testament, who is to see all the will of the dying Mediator performed. Concerning which we may consider, (1.) Who is executor of Christ's testament. (2.) What belongs to that office, or person for that employment. (3.) The fitness of the person for that office.

1<sup>st</sup>, The Holy Ghost is the executor of Christ's testament. He is delegated by the Father and by Jesus Christ to see his will performed, and to make good all the legacies that he hath left to his friends, John xiv. 26. & xv. 26. *But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, — he shall testify of me.* The meaning is, "My Father and I will send " my Spirit, as the executor of my testament, who " shall actually perform and do to you, for you, and " in you, whatsoever I have intended in my latter- " will, and purchased by my death." Therefore the apostle saith, 1 Cor. vi. 11. *Ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, viz. as the testator, and by the Spirit of our God, as the executor of his testament.* And in this the resemblance was like unto a man's testament, the executor whereof cannot perform any thing of his will concerning his friends, till by the testator's death a way be opened for the executor's intromission. So neither was the Holy Ghost to perform any of Christ's legacies till a way was made by Christ's death for the Spirit's acting in that delegation. See John xvi. 7. *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

2<sup>dly</sup>, It belongs to his office and employment, generally to see Christ's testament and latter-will performed and done in all points. More particularly,

(1.) To let every man read his right, and to make known to Christ's friends his will concerning them,



even in those things which they might have either mistaken or forgotten, (although they had heard of them). And this is the Spirit's work and office, John xiv. 26. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." 1 Cor. ii. 12. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

(2.) To give the testator's goods to such persons as he had left them in legacy to, and to no others; to do according to the defunct's will, and by no other rule; which is the Spirit's office, John xvi. 13. "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak."

(3.) To see the will of the defunct done in his way, in such manner of conveyance as he thinks fit; and this is the Spirit's work to do things in the way of Christ's will, John xiv. 27. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." Compare chap. xvi. 8. 9. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me." He will give peace, joy, right hearing in prayer to whom Christ left it; but in his way, and according to the rule of his will; he will not speak peace till he first reprove, and he will convey it in the manner of a free gift, and under terms of his office, as one performing the executor's work as Christ left it and other blessings.

(4.) To see this done and performed according to the time set down in Christ's will. The Holy Ghost will perform all Christ's will; but some things he will do presently, and some things not till a while afterwards. Some things he will entitle us to, but will not put us in possession of them at first; he will do things as we can bear them, and are in capacity to receive them; and all this, because it is the will of Christ the Testator it should be so, John xiv. 20. "At that day ye shall know, that I am in my Father, and

"you in me, and I in you." Chap. xvi. 22. "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." Hence he gives some things presently, but not perfectly, as grace; some things perfectly, but not presently, as perfect union among the saints is left in Christ's testament, and perfect knowledge of our union with him, John xiv. 26. & xvii. 21.; and some things presently and perfectly, as justification; some things neither presently nor perfectly, as experimental fruition and comfort, as he that buyeth lands, or she that marrieth a rich man, hath presently *jus ad rem*, though not the sweet comfort of using all at first; some things absolutely, as necessities and essentials; some things conditionally, as comfortable and temporal things.

3dly, Consider the Spirit's fitness for this employment, and how well qualified an executor Christ hath left in his testament. There are four things required in a fit executor.

(1.) Knowledge of the testator's will. The Holy Ghost, and none else, thoroughly understands it. He cannot mistake Christ's will in the execution of it, as oftentimes is the case among men, 1 Cor. ii. 11. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." John xv. 26. "He is called the Spirit of truth, that shall testify of Christ."

(2.) Faithfulness, to do according to the testator's will. And this testimony Christ beareth to his Spirit, John xiv. 26. "He shall teach you all things, whatsoever I have said unto you." John xvi. 13. "He shall not speak of himself."

(3.) Ability, that he be a responsible person, able to make so great an intromission forthcoming. And for this Christ hath engaged his own word, that the Holy Ghost shall be forthcoming for all the goods that he left to his people, that he shall answer believers claim, and be responsible; as John xiv. 16. 26. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom



"the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you  
 "all things, and bring all things to your remembrance,  
 "whatsoever I have said unto you." He is the Spirit  
 of grace, of Christ and of the Father, and the hand  
 of God, Heb. x. 24. Rom. viii. 9. Luke i. 66.

(4.) Willingness to undertake the office, that his  
 heart lie to the business. This also is a qualification  
 of the executor of Christ's testament. His heart is as  
 much to the fulfilling of Christ's will as the testator's.  
 How can it be otherwise? seeing he is *the Spirit of Je-  
 sus Christ*, Phil. i. 19. His will is one with Christ's  
 as he is God, and agrees in one with his will as he is  
 Mediator; that will being being the execution of the  
 ancient decrees of the will of God. And this makes  
 not a little for the comfort and satisfaction of belie-  
 vers, that they see so clear a way laid down for exe-  
 cuting all the will of Christ concerning their good.

10. Christ hath also provided by his testament a  
 guardian or tutor for believers. He hath not only  
 left an executor of his testament, but also he hath left  
 and nominated his Father as tutor testamentary to all  
 that shall believe on him. This is held forth strongly  
 and clearly, forasmuch as it is put in his testament  
 both negatively and positively.

(1.) Negatively, John xiv. 12. *I will not leave you  
 comfortless*, or rather *orphans*, or fatherless, Jam. i. 17.  
*Orphans* is more than fatherless; it is to be not only  
 without parents, but without tutors. They are pro-  
 perly such as are under age, being unable to do for  
 themselves, and having none to do for them. Christ  
 saith in his testament, *I will not leave you in such a  
 condition as orphans*. But,

(2.) Positively, he leaves them to the tuition and  
 care of his holy Father, John xvii. 11. 1 Pet. i. 5.  
 Now, this tutory under which Christ hath left belie-  
 vers by his testament, holds out two things.

[1.] What is the condition of the true church of  
 God and his children in respect of themselves; and  
 that, 1.) In their external condition while they are in

this world. Many a time may they say, We are orphans and fatherless, Lam. v. 3. The people of God are exposed to many injuries and oppressions, as a poor orphan; and even wronged oftentimes by those who should be tutors and nursing fathers to them, Hk. xlix. 23. 2.) In respect of their spiritual state. Believers are under age, like young heirs kept low and strait, in half a servile condition, not fit to be trusted with the great things unto which they are born, as not being able to manage so great a trust, but like foolish children apt to be deceived, and to put away their inheritance, Gal. iv. 2. 3.

[2.] It holds forth the blessed lot of the children of God by reason of Christ's testament. 1.) In respect of their condition in this world. Although they may seem to themselves and to others to be in the condition of orphans, yet Christ has not left them in such a condition, but has provided better for them, by his leaving them to his Father's care, Hos. xiv. 3. *For in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.* 2.) In regard of their spiritual state. It is a believer's happiness to be as an orphan left by Christ to his Father's tutory, still to be in the condition of a minor, as a young heir that is not *sui juris*, but is under tutors. (1. Because no deed done by a believer without his tutor's consent, and redounding to his prejudice, is valid, or can stand good in law against him. There is a weakness and invalidity in all their actions; and this is their strength, that their deeds are the deeds of minors, and children that are under age. And to this purpose are the words of Christ applicable, which were spoken to another purpose, John xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing.* (2. There is place to revoke by repentance any thing done by a believer to his hurt, when he shall come to understand himself better, Jer. iii. 13. *Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, &c.* as a young heir may do when he comes to be of age. (3. A believer may well throw away his peace and comfort, and bring abatement upon his graces; but



it is far from his hands to put away his inheritance, as 1 Pet. i. 4. John xiv. 2. 3. He may do with some things that are given for his present use, as foolish children do in their nonage with what is in their power, but cannot throw away his chiefest interests. (4. It is a blessed necessity that all believers are under, in all deeds and transactions of moment, to ask their Tutor's consent, and to have no complete freedom to do any thing without him, but to bring all their transactions to be ratified by him, and in all their carriage and managing what is put in their hands, to be accountable to a wise and faithful Tutor. (5. That believers are not cast off by their Tutor for their foolish pranks, though perhaps they may be more roughly handled and kept more strait, as tutors deal with their pupils, Jer. xxxi. 37. Psal. lxxxix. 30.—33. Do not therefore, O believer, mistake God's way with you, when he handles you as a wise tutor dealeth with foolish children; nor complain of your condition; for if you do, it is without cause.

11. There is in Christ's testament a solemn blessing left to his children and friends, according to the custom used in ancient and latter times. Of which see instances, Gen. xxvii. 4. 27. xlviii. 10. 15. &c. xlix. *per tot.* Deut. xxxiii. throughout; 1 Kings ii. 1.—10. Where we find these four things done in contemplation of death, as part of the blessings and latter-will of those dying men; in all which they were types of Christ, and their blessings were typical of that which Christ was to do in his testament.

1st, Solemn blessings pronounced by them, Gen. xxvii. 27. *The smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed.* Chap. xlviii. 9, 15. *And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. And he blessed Joseph, and said, God—bless the lads;* Deut. xxxiii.

2dly, Solemn commands laid upon their children, Gen. xlix. 29. *And he charged them.* 1 Kings ii. 1. &c. *And he charged Solomon his son.*

3dly, Solemn predictions of things that should befall them, Gen. xlix. 1. *And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.*

4thly, Solemn prayers offered up to God for them, Deut. xxxiii. 7. 8. 16. *And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him, and be thou an help to him from his enemies. And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah. — Let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. Gen. xlviii. 15. 16. And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac: and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.*

All which we find in Christ's testament, as his exercising all his offices in contemplation of his death, As a King he lays commands upon his people in his latter-will, to signify that he died as a King. As a Prophet he foretells the things that should befall his people. And as a Priest he blesses them and prays for them, about the time he was to offer himself a sacrifice for them.

(1.) You find in Christ's testament solemn commands laid on his disciples as part of his latter-will, which he would have them do when he is gone, negative and affirmative commands. See John xiii. 34. 35. *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* Chap. xv. 4. 9. 17. *"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear*



“ fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more  
 “ can ye, except ye abide in me.—As the Father hath  
 “ loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my  
 “ love.—These things I command you, that ye love  
 “ one another.” Chap. xiv. 1. 15. 27. “ Let not  
 “ your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe  
 “ also in me.—If ye love me, keep my command-  
 “ ments.—Peace I leave with you, my peace I give  
 “ unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto  
 “ you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let  
 “ it be afraid.” Matth. xxvi. 41. “ Watch and pray,  
 “ that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed  
 “ is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

(2.) Solemn predictions of things that should befall  
 them after his death, both the good and evil: John xv.  
 19. 20. “ If ye were of the world, the world would  
 “ love his own: but because ye are not of the world,  
 “ but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore  
 “ the world hateth you. Remember the word that I  
 “ said unto you, The servant is not greater than his  
 “ lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also  
 “ persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they  
 “ will keep yours also.” Chap. xvi. 2. “ They shall  
 “ put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time com-  
 “ meth, that whosoever killeth you will think that he  
 “ doth God service.” Chap. xiv. 16. 26. “ And I will  
 “ pray the Father, and he shall give you another  
 “ Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.  
 “ —But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,  
 “ whom the Father will send in my name, he shall  
 “ teach you all things, and bring all things to your  
 “ remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”  
 Chap. xvi. 20. 23. “ Verily verily I say unto you, that  
 “ ye shall weep and lament; but the world shall rejoice:  
 “ and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be  
 “ turned into joy:—Verily verily I say unto you,  
 “ Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he  
 “ will give it you.”

(3.) Solemn blessings pronounced and left unto them,

John xiv. 27. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Matth. xxvi. 28. "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins."

(4.) Solemn prayers offered up to God for them, John xvii. throughout. And if Christ hath pronounced and prayed for a blessing on his people, certainly it must be effectual, and it is not to be doubted but it will light, Numb. xxiii. 19. 20. "God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment: bless; and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it."

12. We may consider the confirmation of Christ's testament, Heb. ix. 16. 17. The apostle illustrates this from the validity of wills and testaments among men, and from the pleading of them in law to receive benefit by them. Here the apostle hints at a twofold confirmation of testaments, or a necessity of two things for making wills of force, and a twofold validity resulting thence.

(1.) There must be the death of the testator: For, says the apostle, *a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all, whilst the testator liveth.* The reason is rendered by lawyers, because as long as a man liveth, *voluntas est ambulatoria*, his will is alterable; he may change it while he liveth; therefore it is not valid till death.

(2.) There must not only be the death of the testator, but there must also of necessity be brought the death of the testator, *probatas*; that is, the death of the testator must be brought, produced, and alleged; testimony thereof must be brought to the court; and this is necessary for proving of the will, as the other is for confirming of it, otherwise the will cannot be of force.

By these forensical things the apostle illustrates and



demonstrates a twofold confirmation of Christ's testament, and accordingly a twofold validity resulting from it.

[1.] Christ's testament is confirmed by his own death; his first testament by a typical death, and his new and second testament by the truth and reality of his own death, Heb. ix. 14. 18. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood." Hence it was *βιβαια*, firm and settled as a pillar on its basis, This made his testament irrevocable, Gal. iii. 15. 17. "Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."

[2.] Christ's testament is again as it were confirmed by his people's faith: John iii. 33. "He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal, that God is true." So Rom. iii. 3. 4. Gal. iii. 14. 15. When believers produce the written testament of the dying Mediator before the court of justice, and by faith plead the benefit of the inheritance and legacies left to them in Christ's latter-will, this is as a new confirmation of Christ's testament, and entering of it in the court, and stating their claim by it, whereby it becomes of force in law, John iii. 19.

Let believers therefore consider, 1. What lies upon them as to the making Christ's testament of force for their profit. You must bring it to the court, ere you can plead any benefit by it. O improve it, seeing Christ has died to confirm it. 2. Let believers be comforted from Christ's making a testament. If it were but a man's testament, yet being confirmed, no man disannulleth it, Gal. iii. 15. It was one of the

laws of the twelve tables, *Uti quisque legasset suas res, ita jus esto.* So the title stood.

II. We are to consider not only a testament, but a new testament. For understanding of this, observe that Christ made his testament two ways.

1. One in typical promises under the law, before he came in the flesh; and so in types and figures he died as it were, and was *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8.

2. The other after his incarnation, in plain and clear terms. When he fulfilled the types, and actually laid down his life, then it was as a closed sealed will. Now it is an open one.

These two testaments differ in three things.

(1.) In excellency. We have better promises and better ordinances. *Better promises*, Heb. viii. 6. Though in effect they were the same, yet are now more in spirit and truth. The first testament had a great mixture of temporal promises; and in the importance of it, it more concerned this life. Their hell was Egypt, their heaven was Canaan, their eternity was long life, their salvation was temporal deliverance, their gladness was the affluence of worldly comforts and blessings, their promises were clogged with more conditions. *Better ordinances*. The first testament was a dispensation full of dark, painful, and chargeable rites. All the services tended rather to stir up brokenness of heart than faith, and signified the death of the sinner more clearly than the death of a Saviour and Redeemer: and as much as they prefigured a Redeemer, they typed out his person rather than our benefit. None but the priest could enter within the vail; the way to the holy place was not yet open; the priest could only eat of the sin-offering, Lev. vi. 26. The priest was only to eat what is offered for the people's sins. Eating implies union; to shew that the death of the sacrifice should become the death of the priest himself. The priest became one



with the beast slain. But now sinners eat the sin-offering, and feed upon the sacrifice. It is notable, that that neither priest nor people could eat of the sin-offering for the whole congregation. The social communion was reserved for the gospel. God and they would not eat at one table, lest they should think their communion full and perfect without us, Lev. xvii. 11. 12. Blood was forbidden on this very ground, because given on the altar, for the remission of sins. Now, this is the reason why we are bidden to drink of it, Matth. xxvi. 27. It is not the blood of the Old Testament, but the New. We have then better promises, and more comfortable ordinances. There needs nothing to complete the new covenant but a new heart.

(2.) In clearness. All was dark and obscure then; there was the blood of lambs and goats, and other sacrifices. Christ's death was then exhibited but in types and figures. The promise of laying down his life was then accepted in the Old Testament, the actual performance is in the New. He was then slain in figure. The doctrine of the Trinity was not clearly known, nor the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, union with Christ, the recompense of reward, and the saints resting place. God did not so familiarly reveal himself as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

(3.) In efficacy. Grace was not amply given forth. The promise of the Spirit was the benefit of gospel-times, Acts ii. Grace was but sparingly given out; now there is a fuller gospel-grace.

III. This new covenant is to be considered as founded upon Christ's blood.

God would have this satisfaction before he would give out grace, that justice might be satisfied as well as mercy glorified. The blood of Christ is the ransom of our souls, the price of our pardon and peace, the foundation of all that grace we expect from God. This expiates sin, merits the gospel-covenant, and the

Spirit to apply it, or grace to enable men to receive the inheritance. In short, the death of Christ is the foundation, life, and soul of the new covenant, which we are to remember in this sacrament.

IV. I proceed to shew the respect which the Lord's supper hath to the new testament.

1. It doth more particularly excite and bind us to look after the blessed legacies of this new testament: In the word, the offer of grace is more general, God speaks promiscuously to all: but in the sacraments it is personally applied. Every one cometh man by man, to take hold of God's covenant. The object revealed in the word is like the brazen serpent that was exposed to the eyes of all without difference and distinction, that whosoever had need, and looked upon it, should be healed; but the object propounded in the sacrament, is like the sprinkling the door-posts with blood, to assure that house of safety. Those things that are propounded generally, should affect all, for none are excluded; but those things that concern us more expressly, do more excite us; for we are not only not excluded, but warned to look after them. In the word there is an invitation, but in the sacrament a closer touch and application: *Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,* Acts ii. 38.

2. Here is a crucified Christ represented to us as in a glass, Gal. iii. 1. Bread and wine are appointed to this use. Now his death is the life of our souls, and his sufferings are the feast of our souls, they being the price of our peace and reconciliation with God. The same flesh that was given to God for sacrifice, is given to us for food; the blood given to God for atonement, is given to us for refreshment, John vi. 51.

3. We profess an union betwixt us and Christ: for as these things are turned into our substance, and become one with us; so does Christ with our souls, John vi. 56. The penitent, hungry, and believing



soul feedeth upon him, and receiveth strength and life from him.

4. By this ordinance the grant of remission of sins and life eternal is confirmed and sealed to us. As there are certain formalities of law which make any deed or conveyance authentic, so by this solemn way do we enter into possession of Christ and his benefits. The promise is sealed by these visible rites, which imply, that as really as our bodies receive the bread and wine, which it represents, so do we receive Christ and all his benefits.

5. It is an ordinance that is accompanied with a special presence of the Spirit. All gospel-ordinances are *the ministration of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. iii. 18. We cannot but expect a blessing upon the use of God's instituted means. It is the great evidence of this truth, 1 Cor. xii. 13. He cometh especially to apply to our souls the benefits of redemption, and to excite faith and love in us, and to fill our hearts with life and comfort.

V. The next head is, to give reasons why the covenant of grace is called a testament.

1. It is called so, in regard of the testator, because it is the will of a dying person, who maketh all the promises that are contained in the covenant, in contemplation of his own death, Heb. ix. 15. 17. compared with Exod. xxiv. 8. "And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, saying, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you."

2. In regard of the death of Jesus Christ, because it is a covenant which behoved to be confirmed by the death of one of the parties covenanting, who is also Mediator of the covenant, without which the testament or covenant of grace had not been of force: for it was not enough that Christ should be a testator, and make declaration of his will in contemplation of his death, unless he had also died to confirm the co-

venant, Heb. ix. 16. *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.*

3. It is called a testament, in regard of the absolute disposition of all things made to us by it, which are required of us in the covenant. A testament is an absolute disposition; and so is the covenant of grace in some respects: for by it are disposed to us all things required of us as conditions and duties, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 27. Zech. xiii. 9. with chap. xii. 10.

4. It is called a testament in regard of the way of conveyance of the inheritance, and all things thereunto belonging, unto believers; viz. by the death of the first heir and possessor; Christ the first-born and heir of all things having by his death made way for his children and brethren to come to the possession of all the covenant-blessings which were given to him, and possessed by him at the first hand, as the heir and first-born of every creature, Col. i. 15. with Heb. ix. 15. 1 Pet. i. 3. 4. So Zech. ix. 11.

5. It is called a testament to express the more of free grace in it, lest we should misconceive of the covenant of grace, and think that it requireth any such condition on our part as might wholly make it void; therefore Christ would, by a free declaration of his will and testament, make sure to us the conditional part of the covenant, John xvii. 24. "Father, I will  
" that they also whom thou hast given me, be with  
" me where I am; that they may behold my glory  
" which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me be-  
" fore the foundation of the world." So Jer. iii. 19.  
" Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn  
" away from me."

6. It is called a testament in regard of the secretness of this mystery of the gospel, till after Christ's death; even as a man's testament uses to lie sealed and not opened till after the death of the testator; so was the mystery of Christ's death in a great measure secret and sealed till after his death, yea even to the apostles



themselves till after his resurrection, Col. i. 26. Luke xxiv. 25. Psal. xxv. 14.

7. It is called a testament in regard of the privileges which believers have by Christ's testament, to shew that Christ hath not only made us servants and friends, but even sons and heirs to whom he disposes the inheritance, John xv. 15. 1 John iii. 1. Gal. iv. 6. 7. Rom. viii. 17.

8. *Lastly*, It is called a testament in regard of the union that is betwixt Christ and believers, to teach us, that as the testator and heir are esteemed in some legal respects as one person, (even as husband and wife are one flesh), and what the heir doth according to the latter-will of the testator, is as if it were done by the testator himself; so Christ and we are one after his death and testament; we are interested in his name, and his name put upon us, and he is interested in our prayers, and other services done in his name, Gen. xlviii. 16. John xiv. 13. & xvii. 23. 26. If. lxiii. ult. *We are shine, &c.*

VI. I come now to shew wherein the difference lies between Christ's testament and other testaments; or point out its excellence above all others.

1. It excels all others in respect of the testator. For, (1.) He is God as well as man, Gal. iii. 15. The blood of this testament is the blood of God, Acts xx. 32. and therefore must be of infinite value.

(2.) Other testators die, and so cannot ever be with their heirs: but Christ liveth for ever, Rev. i. 18. and is always with us to the end, Heb. vi. 25. Matth. xxviii. 20.

(3.) Other testators can do their friends no more good after their death, nor can they return to them, If. lxiii. 16. "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting." But Christ doth us yet more good after his death, Heb. vii. 25.

“ He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

(4.) Human testators cannot foretell to those they leave behind them all things which shall befall them: but when Christ was about the making of his testament, he clearly foretold the things that were to befall his friends, yea and his enemies too. He foretold Judas's sin and Peter's fall, John xiii. 18. 26, as likewise the desertion of all the apostles, John xvi. 32. and also the persecution they were to meet with from the world, John xv. 19. & xvi. 2. 33.

2. It excels others in respect of the legacies left. There were never such legacies bequeathed in any human though royal testament as those in Christ's testament.

(1.) These legacies are of a spiritual nature. Earthly testators can but dispoſe earthly things: but Christ left us spiritual things, spiritual life, joy, fellowship, faith, perseverance, remission of sins, &c. John xiv. 19. xvi. 20. 22. xv. 15. & xvii. 11. 12. 24. Matth. xxvi. 28.

(2.) Christ's legacies excel all others in respect of plenitude. Other testaments may dispoſe many things, but no testament can make over all things to the legataries but Christ's; for he only is *the heir of all things*, Heb. i. 2. Other testaments may bequeath some things, and that only of one world, viz. this present life: but Christ's legacies contain two worlds, and all things pertaining to both, 2 Pet. i. 3. 4. “ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” 1 Tim. iv. 8. “ Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

(3.) They excel in regard of durableness and stability. Other inheritances and legacies may be taken



from us; but those good things which Jesus Christ leaves us in his testament, no man can take from us, John xvi. 22. *And your joy no man taketh from you.* Chap. xiv. 27. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

(4.) Other legacies must be kept by us, otherwise they may be soon lost; but Christ's legacies keep us more than we keep them. Believers are to use their endeavours to keep any good thing they get by Christ's testament; yet notwithstanding they are rather kept by grace than keepers of it; 1 Pet. i. 5. "Who are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." For instance, he leaves us faith, Eph. ii. 8. —the peace of God, John xiv. 27.; "and this peace shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," Phil. iv. 7. shall keep with a garrison, as the original word imports: so that when Satan and the world shall lay siege against you, yet you shall be safe, and lie down in peace, and sleep, Psal. iv. 8. & lxxvi. 1.

(5.) Other testaments may be exhausted, so as some who seek benefit by them may fall short; but Christ's testament can never be exhausted; there is abundance to fulfil all his will, and to pay all his debt of favour to his people, to fulfil his promises, and to supply his people's wants. The reason is manifest, Col. i. 19. "It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell," Chap. ii. 9. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Heb. i. 2. "Whom he hath appointed heir of all things." His riches are unsearchable, Eph. ii. 8.

3. Christ's testament excels human testaments in respect of the heirs and legataries to whom he hath left his goods. For,

(1.) The benefit of human testaments extends but to a few, Christ's to many, Matth. xxvi. 28. yea, to a world, an elect world, to a great number which no man can number, of all nations, tongues, and lan-

guages, Rev. vii. 9. to all generations of the world, John xvii. 20. Psal. ciii. 18. 20.

(2.) The benefit of human testaments cannot extend to those that were dead before the testator's death: but Christ's to many who were dead long before he died himself, Zech. ix. 11. because he died typically long before, being the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Therefore his testament was of force to believers who lived before his coming in the flesh, and before his death.

(3.) In human testaments the fewer the heirs and legataries be, the better it is for them: but the greater number of heirs Christ have, every true child of God rejoices at it, and finds no loss, but gain and joy thereby. So 2 Cor. vii. 7. "Now I rejoice,—that ye sorrowed to repentance." 2 John 4. "I rejoiced greatly, that I found of thy children walking in truth." John iii. 29. He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled."

(4.) In human testaments, every servant and friend is not a son, and every son is not an heir. But Christ's testament makes every son, friend, and servant, an heir, and joint heir with Christ, Gal. iii. 26. John xv. 15. Rom. viii. 17. John xvii. 20. 24.

4. Christ's testament excels all human testaments in respect of the executor and execution of his testament.

(1.) Human testaments are executed by men; but the executor of Christ's is the Holy Ghost, John xiv. 26. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." And if the testator be God, and the executor God, there must needs be much of God in the testament.

(2.) Human testaments are not only executed by men, but oftentimes by men unfit, and wanting necessary quali-



fications, of understanding, power, or faithfulness. But Christ's testament hath designed a qualified executor, that cannot err in performing his will, as was shewn before; so that they have no ground to fear through Christ's executor.

(3.) Human testaments do ordinarily fail in the execution, and favours are designed for persons in them which are not performed though they have execution, because of many incidents and emergents: but it is not so with Christ's testament; there are no favours designed, no legacies left to any person by Christ's testament, that wants performance to the heirs of promise, John xiv. 26. Luke i. 45.

5. It excels all other testaments in respect of the tutory under which Christ hath left his people by his testament. In human affairs many children are left fatherless and tutorless; others are no better, being left in the hands of unfaithful tutors; and those who are left in best condition by any human testament, are but left unto the care of men. But our Lord Jesus Christ hath provided better for his people by his testament; forasmuch as he has left them neither fatherless nor tutorless, John xiv. 18. neither hath he committed them to the tutory of unfaithful tutors, nor yet to men; but he hath left them all to his Father's tutory, John xvii. 11. 2 Thess. iii. 3. "The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil." Christ hath left God to be tutor to his children. And the difference betwixt human testaments and Christ's testament lies in this.

(1.) Tutors appointed by men may prove unfaithful and unkind; for *every man is a liar*, Rom. iii. 4. but the tutor of Christ's testament cannot do so; for he is *faithful and just*, 1 John i. 9. *the true God*, Jer. x. 10. *the God of truth*, Psal. xxxi. 5. *mindful of his covenant*, Psal. cxi. 5.

(2.) Human tutors may change their affection and the performing of their duty; for man is a mutable thing: but the tutor of Christ's testament cannot do so, he is not subject to changes, Jam. i. 17.

(3.) Human tutors may fall short in their duty for want of power to execute it; but nothing is too hard for the believer's tutor, Gen. xviii. 14. Psal. cxv. 3. & cxxxv. 6.

(4.) Human tutors may die, for they are mortal men, Is. xl. 6. 7. Psal. cxlvi. 3. 4. But he who is a believer's tutor endures for ever, as 1 Tim. i. 17. Psal. cii. 27. He is *the God of the spirits of all flesh*.

(5.) Human tutors may decline the burthen of the care of those who are left unto them, Is. iii. 6. 7. But the believer's tutor does not decline that burthen, nor does he weary of it, Is. xl. 28. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding." Chap. xlv. 4. "And even to your old age I am he, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you." And here is yet more of God in Christ's testament, when God the Son is testator, the Holy Ghost executor of the testament, and God the Father tutor-testamentary. This is the heirs excellency indeed, that all the persons of the Trinity are in Christ's testament.

6. Christ's testament excels all human ones in respect of the blessings of it.

(1.) The blessing that is left to children or friends in human testaments, is but the wish and prayer of the testator for a blessing, as appears from Gen. xlviii. 16. "The angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac: and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." But though men can do no more, Christ can; for he did not only pray for a blessing to his people, but he doth really and effectually confer blessings upon them. See Acts iii. 26. "Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his



“ iniquity.” Luke xxiv. 50. “ And he lift up his eyes and blessed them.”

(2.) The blessing of human testaments oftentimes falls not out according to the wish and prayer of the testator; but Christ’s blessing never misseth. They are all blessed indeed whom he hath blessed by his testament, Psal. iii. 8. Gal. iii. 14. Psal. cxv. 13. 15.

(3.) In human testaments sometimes there are some of the children excepted, and left out of the testator’s blessing, Gen. ix. 25. “ And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.” But in Christ’s testament there are none of his children left out in his blessing, not the most unworthy if he be a son, John xvii. 20. Psal. cxii. 2.

(4.) In human testaments the blessings are very different; to one there is a more large blessing left, and to another a more sparing one, according to the variation of grounds of blessing, or of the testator’s affection. See Gen. xxvii. xlviii. & xlix. But Christ leaves an equal blessing as to the substance of the gospel-blessings to all his children, without respect of persons. See the scriptures before cited; and also John xiii. 1. Luke xxiv. 50. John xvii. 20.

(5.) In human testaments, the blessing of many children is but a lean blessing and portion; but Christ’s a full blessing, a fat portion; they that get it need no more, Eph. i. 3. Lam. iii. 24. John xiv. 8. 2 Cor. ix. 8.

7. Christ’s testament excels all others, in respect of the manner and grounds of conveying and bequeathing his legacies. This difference he hath expressly stated from his own mouth, John xiv. 27. “ Not as the world giveth; give I unto you,” says he to his disciples, when he is to leave them.

(1.) The world giveth favours upon grounds of interest, and most of their good deeds are drawn forth because of their interest and relations. But Christ’s conveyance of favour is far otherwise: he bequeaths favours whereby he makes actual interest, and engages

souls unto him. The world leaves legacies to their friends, but Christ to his enemies, whereby he makes friends of them, Rom. v. 8. 10. Col. i. 21.

(2.) The world leaves their goods to them that deserve best of them, and who may recompense their kindneses with good for good; but Christ leaves and gives his legacies to the most unworthy and undeserving, and from whom no recompense can be expected; for his favour is free; and as he is no respecter of persons, so neither of the different qualities of persons to whom he doth good, Rom. v. 6. 1 Tim. i. 15. 2 Sam. vii. 18.

(3.) The world leaves and gives favours, and reverses them again, when they find it not for their advantage; when they are provoked, they change. But Christ does never reverse what he bequeaths in his testament, Rom. xi. 29. Jer. xxxi. 37. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

More particularly, as to the gift and conveyance of peace, [1.] The world gives peace to the wicked, but Christ otherwise: Is. lvii. 21. "There is no peace, "saith my God, to the wicked." [2.] The world's peace will make us friends with wicked men; Christ's peace makes us enemies to wicked men, and them enemies to us, Psal. cxxxix. 21. [3.] The world's peace relieves us but from some external trouble; Christ's peace takes away sin, which is the cause of all our miseries, Eph. ii. 14. 15. [4.] The saints have oftentimes most of Christ's peace, when they have least of the world's, John xvi. 33. Christ gives peace even in the midst of trouble, which the world cannot do. [5.] The world's peace is not effectual to make peace; for it is not in their power, either to give peace or to take it away, except by God's permission. But it is in the power of Jesus Christ to give peace at his pleasure; and when he gives it, he makes it effectual, Job xxxiv. 29. "When he giveth quietness, who then can make "trouble?" [6.] Christ's peace is durable; the world's peace is not so, but oftentimes is of no continuance, John xvi. 22. Is. xl. 1. The world's peace is



dissemble and hypocritical, 2 Sam. xx. 9. [7.] Christ's peace alone can comfort the heart, and bear it out against the world's tribulation, and without their peace; but the world's peace cannot comfort against the want of Christ's peace, John xvi. 33. Phil. iv. 7. [8.] Christ's peace is so transcendent a thing and unspeakable, as transcends all knowledge, Phil. iv. 7. But the world's may be reached.

8. *Lastly*, Christ's testament excels all human testaments, and differs from them, in respect of the form of it.

(1.) No human testament is of force before the testator's death; but lies altogether useless.

(2.) Neither does the force of any human testament reach all generations, from the beginning of the world to the end thereof: but Christ's testament was not so, even when it was exhibited in types and figures, (tho' the force of it was more after his own death); wherefore the apostle proves that it was of force even in Moses's time, Heb. ix. 17, 18. 20.; and it was of force from the beginning of the world, so far as he is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8.

(3.) It is not the force or nature of a human testament to convey the legacies bequeathed meritoriously by the death of the testator, but only by his free gift. But Christ's testament is of force to make a conveyance of justice as well as of free grace and gift, his death and testament being perfectly meritorious.

(4.) In human testaments, the first is wholly made void by the second. But Christ's latter testament does not abrogate his first testament; as to the substance of it, it standeth *pro tanto*; and what he hath added to clear his will in the second testament, is of force also.

I come now to the application of this doctrine.

1. See from this a discovery of the cursed and

wretched estate of those who are out of Christ, and have no part nor portion in his testament. He excludes the world, John xiv. 17. 19. & xvii. 19. Yea he plainly disclaims and disinherits many who are children of the kingdom, Matth. vii. 23. & viii. 12. whereby he intimates, that it is not only the unchurched world that is excluded his testament, but also the unbelieving world, although, as to their church-state, they were children of the kingdom. Now this is the cursed estate of all that are not in Christ, and have no part in his testament. Every one out of Christ falleth under that curse, Psal. cix. 9. 12. *Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.* Whereas none of Christ's children shall be fatherless, yea the most wretched are made the children of the kingdom, Eph. ii. 12.

2. This shews the blessedness of all those who are in Christ, and consequently have part in Christ's testament. There are no people all the world over whose lot is to be compared with them: hence David and they sing, Psal. xvi. 6. *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.* Deut. xxxiii. ult. *Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.* 2 Sam. vii. 23. "And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, "whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, "and to make him a name, and to do for you great "things, and terrible, for thy land, before thy people which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from "the nations and their gods." They have a portion in the most excellent legacies; there is none like these, no riches, no tutory, no inheritance, no such sure conveyance, &c. as theirs. Here are promises not only of glory upon condition of grace, but also an absolute promise of grace, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. 27. grace,



and influences to breathe upon it, to keep grace alive. Here is the fair wind that wafts the sinner forward in duty and over Jordan to Immanuel's land: here they lie fair for divine influences, John xvii. *per tot.* O how should this commend the testament of Christ to us, and the lot of believers under it! By virtue hereof there is promised to us, (1.) A spiritual life, John xiv. 19. *Because I live, ye shall live also.* Gal. ii. 20. (2.) Influences are promised to keep that life, Is. xxvii. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* (3.) There is a way laid down how to lie fair in the way of divine influences, and how to fetch the wind when we are becalmed, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. *I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them;* Song v. 1.

3. This serves for exhortation, to stir us all up who live under the preaching of Christ's testament, that we may make it our work, duty, and one thing desired and necessary to be minded, how we may have part and interest in Christ's testament.

You have heard of a confirmed sealed testament, and that this is a new testament, where the ordinances are accommodated to a more spiritual help, and this founded in the blood of your Redeemer, who by his death hath merited your reconciliation with God, and all this represented, sealed, and exhibited to you in this duty. O then mind your duty, and go about it advisedly.

1. As a testament. (1.) Have you entered yourselves as heirs to Christ's testament? You may be the children of the kingdom, and yet cast out, pray, preach, communicate, Matth. vii. 23. Luke xiii. 26. O the cursed estate of those out of Christ, that have no part nor portion in him! The only evidence is, if we have received Christ as offered in the gospel, 1 John v. 12. John i. 12. We first receive him in the promise, and then in the sacrament. Do ye so receive him as to give up yourselves to God by him. You must consent to him without exceptions or reserves.

You must entirely resign yourselves to him, with a full, hearty, entire consent. There must be an accepting of Christ, as offered to us in the gospel with all his benefits, or a consenting that he be ours and we his.

2. Challenge your right, lay claim to the blessings of the covenant, as children do to their estates left them in a testament sealed. Bring forth and produce the written testament of your dying Mediator before the court of God's justice, and by faith plead the benefit of the inheritance. Sue out the legacies. Let not the testament of Christ lie by as useless. Say, "Lord, I am a guilty sinner, that deserveth to be sealed up under a curse. But, Lord, thou hast sent thy Son to save poor sinners; he died and gave his life a ransom for many, offereth grace in the gospel, and now hath condescended to my weakness, so far as to give me visible security."

3. Bind yourselves to the Lord anew. When you renew a covenant, you must not only lay claim to privileges, but bind yourselves to the duties of it, *Is. xlv. 5. Dent. xxvii. 9. & xxvi. 17. 18.* We are said to enter into the bond of the holy oath, *Is. lvi. 4.* For motives, consider,

(1.) That thou canst have no lot nor inheritance among them who are sanctified, except thy name and portion be in Christ's testament, except the gospel speak good to thee, and entitle thee particularly to Christ's good things, as if thy name and surname were written in it. Thou canst never be served heir to the testator, nor with him, except his testament entitle thee.

(2.) Thou canst have no benefit at all by Christ's death, except thou have interest in his testament. It doth not open a way to the inheritance to any other persons, but such only as are designed children and heirs by his testament, *Heb. vi. 17. & ix. 15. Rom. viii. 17.* He hath called his people to rejoice in this privilege as their chief privilege, and to wonder at



the love that bestowed it upon them, Luke x. 20.  
1 John iii. 1.

The next use shall be of examination. Let us try whether we have any part or portion in Christ's testament. We might apply the rules already laid down, and if you make it a question, I answer briefly from these scriptures.

1. The Lord himself maketh answer, Jer. iii. 19. *Thou shalt call me, My Father.* If thou dost own God as a Father, by believing on him; or if thou wilt yet do it, thou mayst be among the children, and have this goodly heritage that was typified by the land of Canaan, 1 John v. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.*

2. If thou hast taken hold on this covenant, or if thou wilt yet do it, Is. lvi. 4. 6. thou mayst have part in this testament, which is the very covenant, considered as confirmed by the death of Christ the Mediator, Heb. ix. 15. 16. 17.

3. If thou hast received the Son, Christ the Testator, the marrow and substance of the covenant, or wilt yet receive him as offered in the gospel, then thou mayst have the privilege of a son, and so a part in this testament, John i. 12. 1 John v. 11. 12. "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: but he that hath not the Son, hath not life."

4. If thou hast been washed from the filth of thy corruption by the blood of this testament, or if thou wilt yet allow the Testator Christ, and suffer him to wash thee, thou shalt have part with him and portion in this blessed testament, John xiii. 8. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me." 1 Cor. vi. 11. "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 John i. 7. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Rev. i. 5. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," &c.

This doctrine may, in the last place, be improved for comfort and establishment to weak and staggering believers, walking humbly under the sense of their wants, and fearing lest they should fall short of so excellent a lot as Christ hath provided for his people by his testament.

Consider, 1. Your title is testamentary. Now a testament is an absolute disposition and free gift, and is not grounded upon desert or condition in the receiver; but it is the declaration of the latter will and love of the testator, John xiii. 1.

2. Your title is by a confirmed testament, the Testator being now dead, (yea, and alive again, Rev. i. 18.); and therefore your holding of grace is unalterable and irrevocable. All that the law saith, or sin, Satan, and the world can do, cannot reverse it, Gal. iii. 15. 17. "Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." So Jer. xxxi. 37. "If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord."

3. A testament is not so much a declaration of the power of Christ and what he can do, as of his will, what he is to do, what his purpose and counsel is, John xvii. 24. "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." John vi. 37. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Luke xii. 32. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And if you give him credit, it is a done business, John iii. 33. "He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal,



"that God is true." Set yourselves therefore to search more into this, to improve and apply Christ's testament, and there you may find comfort and establishment to your souls; for faith accepting the testament of Christ, and the full and free promises of the gifts and inheritance therein disposed, maketh it a covenant actually entered into by us.

# DISCOURSE VI.

## Room for Sinners in Christ\*.

LUKE xiv. 22.

*—And yet there is room.*

**T**HE primary intention of our blessed Lord, and the scope of his eternal Spirit, by this parable, is certainly to demonstrate and foretell the rejection of the Jews, on account of their contempt of Jesus Christ, and his glorious gospel, and the reception of the Gentiles, upon their embracing the Saviour, and the gospel-offer. The Jews were first bidden, that is, called and invited by John the Baptist's preaching, and by our Lord himself, and by the apostles, to the receiving of Christ, that so they might be prepared for the marriage-supper of the Lamb, Rev. xix. 7. that is, partake of all the glory and felicity of the heavenly state. The Gentiles are here set out under the notion of such as were in lanes, streets, and highways, in a very wretched and beggarly condition. Noble offers are made to both in the most inviting terms, that the elect may be allured and captivated to the faith and obedience of Christ and his gospel, and the impenitent and unbelieving may be left the more inexcusable by their neglect of this great salvation.

We shall not stay upon the interpretation of the parable at full length, of which the text is a part. Only we are to know, that by the certain man, or eminent person, who made this repast, is meant the great and blessed God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the immense fountain of all perfection and goodness; who though he enjoyed an infinity of blessedness in himself from all eternity, without any de-

\* This sermon was preached at Marytown, in 1732.



pendence upon the creature, yet was willing to remember us in our low estate.

The supper itself is the rich and noble provision made in Christ for the entertainment of all those who believe, both in the gospel-church here below, and in the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. This is well styled a great supper, as containing all the treasures of the new covenant, all the mercy and grace that was in the heart of the Father to bestow from eternity, and which the blood of the Son purchased in the fulness of time.

The guests invited to this rich supper, are all poor indigent sinners, to whom the joyful sound of the glorious gospel comes; who have all grace and glory offered upon their acceptance thereof.

The success of the invitation is various; some rejected, and some embraced it.

(1.) Some rejected it, and particularly those, at least the generality, who had the honour of the first offer and invitation, who all began to make sinful excuses; one saying, *I have bought a piece of ground, &c.* ver. 18. 19. 20.

(2.) Others embraced the gospel, and the grace therein offered; and these were the poor, the maimed, halt, and blind, who lay scattered here and there in the streets and lanes of the city: by whom some understand either the despicable among the Jews, or the outcast Gentiles; or some of both, who, through the effectual operation of the Spirit of God, accept of this sweet invitation, and come in at this call.

But though many of these came in, yet the table was not filled; and this occasions the servant to tell his lord, *It is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.*

Thus the words of the text come in, which comprehends the servant's report to his lord concerning the execution and success of his commission. (1.) Of the execution of it, *It is done as thou hast commanded.* (2.) Of the success of it, *And yet there is room.* Where observe,

1. Something implied, which points at an already; and tells that there were a great many, a numerous company, elsewhere represented in scripture as a great host or army which no man can number, already come in to Christ, the King's Son, who is also King in Zion.

2. Something more directly asserted; and it is this, that although there was a vast number come in, some already shining and singing in glory, and some in the way to heaven, and some on the threshold of glory, yet there was still room for more. Where again we may notice,

(1.) The ample extent of our Lord's house, love, and heart to entertain poor sinners.

(2.) The unwillingness of Christ's servants to hide or lessen this grace: *And the servant said, And yet there is room.* These paronyms and friends of the Bridegroom of souls rejoice to see the isles wait for him, and the ships of Tarshish to bring his sons from far, to see the south give up, and to observe the north not holding back, &c. Therefore they set the trumpet to their mouth, and publish the call and proclamation of this great grace and salvation, *And yet there is room.*

The doctrine resulting from this pleasant portion of holy writ is this, viz.

*Doct. That after all the vast number of poor and unworthy sinners that are actually come in to, and are graciously received by our merciful Lord and mighty Redeemer, yet there is room for more.*

Christ will magnify the house of his glory here, and in his house above are many mansions. And now that this blessed message may be set before you in the most engaging manner, I shall shew you, through divine assistance,

I. What this phrase, *And yet there is room*, implies.

II. Who they are for whom there is yet room.

III. Where there is this room.

IV. That actually and really there is room.



V. Why there is all this room.

VI. Make improvement of the whole.

I. We shall shew what this phrase, *And yet there is room*, implies. It implies,

1. That there is a certain indefinite number that shall and must come in to Christ: i. e. there are places prepared for more, which are yet empty, John vi. 37. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

2. That God will have his house full, ver. 23. All the elect must be called, both among Jews and Gentiles.

3. Either that some who were called did delay, and alas! there are many such in all ages and places, or else that there were some that were not yet invited, or not yet called: for here, in the context, the servant was sent again upon this message of inviting sinners to come to Christ.

4. The largeness or extensiveness of God's love to sinners. His love is not extended to all universally. I know, the learned Davenant *de morte Christi*, &c. and some others, tell us of a *pactum universale* between the Father and the Son. But that which they make their *pactum universale*, is rather a proposition or a promise than a covenant, as, *He that believeth shall be saved*. We may preach the gospel to all upon an indefinite proposition, *He that believeth shall be saved*, and we need not assert a *pactum universale*, or universal covenant, for the universal preaching of the gospel; and we suppose that this was the great reason that prevailed with those worthy men to assert such a covenant. But we know no other covenant but that special covenant into which the seed of Christ were only taken. For these Christ engaged to lay down his life; and redemption on the Son's part will be as large as election on the Father's part, that there may be a perfect harmony and agreement betwixt them in their love. And this love and grace of theirs is extended to all the nations of the world, not to the Jews only, but to the

Gentiles also. Therefore we read, Luke ii. 32. that Christ was given to the Gentiles to be *a light to them, that he might be God's salvation to the ends of the earth.* Many, yea very many have been called, and yet there is room for multitudes more, who in the latter days shall be called, and shall flock to Christ like doves to their windows.

II. I shall next shew who they are for whom there is room.

I. For sensible and broken-hearted sinners, who, from a sense of sin and the dreadful desert of sin, are crying out with Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. 19. 20. "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear Son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." O what affecting and soul-melting expressions are these! If any words can move a sensible sinner, they must be these. Thus in the instructive case of the prodigal son, Luke xv. 18.—22. will you view the actings of this profligate child towards his father, which represent the actings of a sinner towards God, and God's gracious actings towards a sinner. Now, as to the sinner, observe, (1.) what he said; and, (2.) what he did. He said, he would arise, and he arose and went, from a deep sense of his need. Notice then the actings of the Father, or of the blessed God, towards him: He sees him, and even when he was a great way off, that is, unconverted, he had compassion on him, fell on his neck, and kissed him. Where we see the infinite compassion of God to a poor, distressed, sen-



lible, and sick-sick soul: he doth not only pity, but makes haste to apply the remedy to such. *I wound and I heal*, saith the Lord; *I kill and I make alive*.

2. For humble and self-aborring sinners, as in these heart-melting expressions in the case of Ephraim formerly cited. Thus Is. lvii. 15. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Job xlii. 5. 6. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." I shall only further instance, on this point, in the case of the prophet Isaiah, who when he had that glorious vision of God and of his infinite holiness, and saw his own vileness, and that he was undone, one of the seraphims, it is said, Is. vi. 1.—6. flew to relieve him. "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged," ver. 6. 7. O see here the bowels of God to a convinced, humble, and self-aborring sinner, one that sees he must perish without Christ. Ah, says God to the angel, (if we may speak so with reverence), there is my poor servant Isaiah in a distressed condition; his heart is ready to break, and his spirit fainteth; flee presently, make haste, and touch his lips, I will relieve him. So also in the case of Joshua the high priest; Zech. iii. 1.—4. "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments,

and stood before the angel. And he answered, and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee; and I will clothe thee with change of raiment."

3. For returning consenting sinners, Is. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Is. i. 18. "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." We have diverse instances of this in holy writ. Take one instance among many I might bring; and that is of Paul, who though he owned himself to be the chief of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. and said he was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, yet "obtained mercy; and the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." He obtained mercy, that in him Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them, which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

4. There is room for sinners of all sorts and of every denomination, whatever their former sins and transgressions have been. For though it is certain, that none will accept the gospel invitation, and come to the Lord Jesus, till, by a convincing work of the Spirit of God upon them, they see their absolute need of him, and their perishing condition without him, yet the gospel offer is directed to sinners as such. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men. Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." Thus, though your iniquities have been very many and great, and attended with the most fearful aggravations, yet there is room in Christ for you: Jer. iii. 1. "Thou hast played the harlot



“with many lovers: yet return again unto me, saith the Lord.” Though ye have continued long in sin, ye have spent your days in sin even till gray hairs have covered your heads, yet there is still room for you. O then come in at last, and fill up his table.

III. I proceed to shew where there is yet room. There is room in the heart of God, and in the heart of Jesus Christ. Solomon (it is thought) in his great love to so many women was a type of Christ; and also that his loving of Pharaoh's daughter, represented Christ's love to poor Gentile sinners. O what love hath Christ to us black, deformed, and sun-burnt Gentiles, that he should send the glad tidings of his gospel among us, and make any of us the darlings of heaven, and the children of God! More particularly there is room for sinners,

(1.) In his blood, Heb. ix. 12. “How much more shall the blood of Christ — purge your conscience from dead works.” 1 John i. 7. “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” Rev. vii. 13. 14. “And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” This virtue and efficacy of the blood of Christ is set forth by the emphatical emblem of the sea, which swallows up every thing that is thrown into it, Mic. vii. 19. “He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” This sea of Christ's blood is deep enough to bury the highest mountains as well as the little hills of sin and guilt. O Sirs, cast all your sins, with all their horrid aggravations, into this deep sea, and they will never rise up in judgment against you.

(2.) In his bowels: We read of *tender mercies*, or *bowels of mercy*, of our God and of his Christ, Luke i. 77. of the bowels of Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 8. "Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies, Heb. thy bowels," Psal. xxv. 6. O what tender mercy and infinite compassion is there in God in Christ to poor perishing sinners! His bowels yearn towards you, will you not then come in? He delighteth in mercy; will you not then accept the offer thereof to you in particular?

(3.) In his arms: If. xl. 11. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Behold his arms are stretched out to receive and embrace you: O then come to him, and he will receive you kindly, and at once forget all your former miscarriages and unkindness to him.

2. There is room in the election of grace, which is not yet full. I mean, those who were given to Christ, and chosen to eternal life, are not yet all called and brought in. God sees and knows who are his, who have been called, and are gone to heaven, and who are not yet called; and until they are all brought in, there is room in the election for the conversion of all such. As election is a profound secret, known only to God, and God in the call of the gospel excludes none, come ye therefore to God through Jesus Christ, and so make your calling and election sure.

3. There is room in God's house below; I mean in his church, Col. iii. 11. where Christ is *all, and in all*. Heb. iii. 6. *Whose house are we*. Believers are like the house or room which Christ bade his disciples prepare for him; an upper room for dignity, an inner room for secrecy, a large room for liberty and ease to him and his followers, a paved room for strength, a prepared room, which implies the lightness of it by knowledge, the sweetness of it by pure and holy thoughts, the richness of it by hangings of tapestry of righteousness, the conveniency of it by a chimney



to keep up the fire of zeal, and a bed of innocence and love to rest in. Thus Prov. ix. 1. "Wisdom hath build-  
 "ed her house, she hath hewn out her seven pil-  
 "lars." Upon this account believers are called upon, H. ix. 1. "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and  
 "the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." And  
 you have the reason of all that solemn gathering to the  
 house in the close of ver. 7. "And I will glorify the  
 "house of my glory." And in ver. 22. "A little  
 "one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong  
 "nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time." It is  
 true, this house was confined sometime within the  
 narrow limits and confines of the Jewish church and  
 nation. But now you may call it by the name of  
 Isaac's well at Gerar, *Rehoboth*, Gen. xxvi. 22. "For  
 "now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall  
 "be fruitful in the land." Here there is room not only  
 for tall cedars, but for bruised reeds and humble shrubs;  
 for Gentile and Jewish sinners, however vile and abo-  
 minable. There are yet many empty places that must  
 be filled, and God will fill his house with guests. E-  
 gypt, Ethiopia, and Sheba must come in. Turks,  
 Tartars, Pagans, and infidels shall be called: Is. lx. 8.  
 "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as doves to  
 "their windows?" Is. xlix. 10. 11. 12. "He that  
 "hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the  
 "springs of water shall he guide them. And I will  
 "make all my mountains a way, and my highways  
 "shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from  
 "far: and lo, these from the north and from the west,  
 "and these from the land of Sinim."

4. There is yet room in the marriage, that is, the  
 covenant of grace, into the bond of which Jesus Christ  
 will bring all his elect ones, Ezek. xx. 37. "I will  
 "bring you into the bond of the covenant." They  
 that are decreatively his, and those for whom he struck  
 hands in the counsel of peace, he will first or last e-  
 spouse, and bring home to his Father's house: Hos. ii.  
 19. *I will betroth thee unto me for ever.*

5. *Lastly*, There is room not only in God's house here, but in his house in heaven. As the militant church is his country-house, in the triumphant house in heaven is his palace, his city, the ivory palace and city of the great King. Christ indeed tells us, Matth. vii. 14. that "strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it:" but yet at the end of the way, the gate is capacious and roomy enough, both to encourage the hopes and entertain the persons of all the numerous body of believers, John xiv. 2. *In my Father's house are many mansions*; and not one of them shall be empty; for all the destined inhabitants shall come and take possession of them. O then, sinners, seeing there is room, come to Christ by faith, and ye shall receive hearty entertainment.

IV. I am next to shew, that really and actually there is room.

The proof has been so intermixed with the preceding heads, that there is the less necessity to enlarge upon it now. Yet, for the encouragement of poor sinners, it will not be amiss to touch on some heads of argument, though with brevity.

1. The continuation of the glorious gospel, and the ministry and call thereof, is an undoubted evidence that yet there is room. For what is the grand design of the gospel-ministry, but to publish the glad tidings of reconciliation and salvation to a perishing world? and what is its language, but, as in Prov. ix. 4. "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither?" The word of the Lord is not one thing to-day, and another thing to-morrow; but is still the same, 1 Pet. i. ult. *The word of the Lord endureth for ever*, the same incorruptible truth. Happy are those nations, countries, and cities that have the gospel and call thereof in a clear and pure administration. There there is a seed that the Lord will bring to himself. For however unsuccessful the gospel many times and in many pla-



ces be, yet there are always some upon whom it is effectual for their salvation.

2. The concurrent frivings of the Spirit of grace are one main thing, which we may look upon as an infallible argument of still remaining room. As long as the Spirit continues his presence with the word, and strives with the souls of men, moving and persuading them to accept of the Saviour, this is a sure indication, that yet there is room. Why does he stand and knock, but to tell you that yet there is room for you?

3. The invariable unchangeableness of God and our Redeemer is an evidence that yet there is room. God who has illustriously displayed his grace in the call and conversion of so many perishing sinners, and Christ who has already died for and actually saved so many of the ruined race of mankind, are still unchangeable: Mal. iii. 6. "I am the Lord, I change not." Heb. xiii. 8. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

4. The unalterable validity of the promises in Christ, is an evidence that yet there is room. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God, 2 Cor. i. 20. They shall be all effectually accomplished, and not one of them shall fail.

V. I proceed to shew why there is all this room for poor sinners.

1. That God may appear to act with a greatness like himself, and discover his great love to sinners, even to poor forlorn Gentiles; and that no poor sensible sinner, who is not yet called in, may be swallowed up of despair.

2. That the merits of Christ may be displayed in their superlative value and transcendent glory. Had it not been for Christ's meritorious sufferings and death, there had been no room for sinners obtaining access to God and acceptance with him: Heb. x. 19. 20. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness [Gr. liberty] to

“ enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a  
“ new and living way, which he hath consecrated for  
“ us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh.”

3. That free grace may shine forth in its most radiant splendor and glory, Eph. i. 6. “ To the praise  
“ of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us  
“ accepted in the Beloved.” Zech. iv. 7. “ He shall  
“ bring forth the head-stone thereof, with shoutings,  
“ crying, Grace, grace unto it.”

4. That sinners may have the greatest encouragement to return to God by Jesus Christ: Is. lvii. 14.

Is. 16. “ Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way,  
“ take up the stumbling-block out the way of my  
“ people. For thus saith the high and lofty One that  
“ inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell  
“ in the high and holy place; with him also that is  
“ of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit  
“ of the humble, and to revive the heart of the  
“ contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither  
“ will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail  
“ before me, and the souls which I have made.” Thus  
God appointed cities of refuge for the reception and safety of the man-slayer, that he might not be put to death. See Deut. iv. 41. 42. Josh. xx. 8. compared with Heb. vi. 18. “ That we might have strong  
“ consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold  
“ upon the hope set before us.”

5. Christ's mystical body is not yet complete. Some members are yet wanting; all the branches are not yet grafted into the true vine and olive-tree: therefore there is still room for further gatherings and ingraftments.

6. It is said, *And yet there is room*, that ministers may know their work is not yet done; and therefore they are to be diligent in the highways and lanes, to invite and call upon sinners to come in and be saved.

7. To demonstrate the great patience and forbearance of God. Though sinners have refused to come in and accept of mercy, and persist in their evil ways,



yet God, with unparalleled mercy and goodness, continues to shew them, that yet there is room for them in his grace and house. O then come in, and no longer abuse the patience and forbearance of God, lest affronted patience be converted into fury.

I shall conclude with a short word of improvement. By way of expostulation. Is there yet room for sinners into the grace and favour of God? Why, then, will you not come in? Bring forth your strong arguments and reasons, if ye have any.

(1.) Is it because ye have no need? Surely ye cannot plead this. For the manslayer, when the avenger of blood was at his heels, had no more need to run and flee to the city of refuge, than you have to run and flee to Christ. Will you view the denunciations of the law to this purpose, and it will make you cry with Job, *O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!* Job xxiii. 2. There was never any person starving for hunger and cold that stood more in need of food and raiment than you do; therefore come to Christ, for he came to seek and to save that which was lost.

(2.) Why will you not put in for room? Is it because you expect salvation any other way? Surely this is the greatest folly: "For there is not salvation in any other: neither is there any other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12.

(3.) Is it because Christ is not willing to receive you? Surely this is as vain a conceit as the former. What means then his coming, dying, rising, and ascending to heaven for sinners? Is not this also clear from his exhortations, calls, entreaties, and expostulations, in scripture? Well may he say concerning you, *Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.*

(4.) Is it because there is no room, and that it is taken up already? You have it here told you, that there is room for you, and as many as are willing to come to Christ; for Christ excludes none, *Him that*

cometh to me I will in nowise cast out. Come in then upon his call, and delay no longer.

USE 2. shall be of comfort to those who have already received, or are willing yet to receive Christ into their hearts. If this be your case, I can assure you, that there is room in Christ's heart for you, and that he will receive you with open arms. Though ye be never so vile, and however unworthy ye may think yourselves, yet if you be looking to and longing for Christ, and willing yet to embrace him as your Saviour, it is a sign that ye belong to him, and that there is room for you; and that,

(1.) Because ye have the gospel continued to you, and the kingdom of heaven is not yet taken from you.

(2.) Because you (some of you especially) attend upon the word with diligence, as men that are sensible of the worth and benefit of it.

(3.) Because it begins (we hope) to reach some of your hearts, and causes you to cry out, *What shall I do to be saved?* This is his end in sending the gospel, and "his word shall not return unto him void, but it shall accomplish that which he pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto he sent it," Is. lv. 11.

I conclude with exhorting you all to bless God for this joyful message, that yet there is room for poor sinners in God's covenant, and to admire the grace and goodness of God that provides so large mansions, and extends his love and benignity to so many, whose number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. Surely God requires a thousand thousand Hallelujahs, and that we should bless him upon a thousand stringed instruments, for this rich display of his grace. Are not all God's creatures called upon to rejoice with us, and to bless God for his love and mercy? Is. xlv. 23. "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel."



## DISCOURSE VII.

**The slain Lamb in the midst of the Throne \***

### REVELATION V. 6.

*And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.*

**A** Sweeter subject and more suitable to this occasion there cannot be. Perhaps some of you have been long hearers of the gospel, and have never to this day got a ravishing sight of a Redeemer, to whose commendation I am to speak from this text. And O that I could borrow the tongue of an angel to describe his excellency to you, that every person here might pay suitable honours to him as the Lamb of God slain for them.

Here we have a glorious vision represented to John, in which you may observe,

1. The title given to the Lord Jesus Christ, *a Lamb*. Sometimes he gets the name of a Lion, *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*, to denote his power. But here he is called a Lamb, to denote his usefulness, his purity, his innocence, his patience, &c. No sooner had he entered on his public ministry, than John pointed him out as *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*, John i. 29. The apostle Peter speaks of him under the same character, 1 Pet. i. 19. *as of a Lamb without spot and blemish*. And this beloved disciple John, in the text, and several other places, gives

\* This sermon was preached at Kinnell on a preparation-day before the communion.

him the same designation. O that we could all by faith behold him as *the Lamb of God*.

2. We have a quality ascribed to this Lamb, *as it had been slain*. This is *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. John Baptist calls him *the Lamb of God*, Peter *the unspotted Lamb*, and John *the Lamb slain*. He delights to repeat this name: he mentions it no less than four times in this chapter, ver. 6. 8. 12. 13. It is a sweet and agreeable name. Every believer in his militant state exults in this name; and we find from the context what joyful acclamations take place among the heavenly host, in honour thereof. The four beasts, the twenty-four elders, and all the celestial choirs, do homage to this Lamb. There is a mighty stir in heaven in celebrating the praises of him who is *the Lamb slain*. O what a noise did this *slain Lamb* occasion at Jerusalem previous to, at, and after his crucifixion! and here a noise is made about him in heaven. It is not for nothing that Christ gets the title of a *slain Lamb* even in his exalted state. By this is pointed out the freshness of his death, and its abiding efficacy for the purgation of sin. Those wounds he received on earth for our sins, are as it were still fresh bleeding in heaven. Christ's death and sufferings are as fresh and green this day in heaven, as they were that day he was crucified, and their virtue is the very same. The saints keep up the memory thereof in the subject of his praises, and we ought to maintain it daily in the word and sacraments.

3. We have here represented the glory of this Lamb. (1.) By the place where he is, *on the throne*, advanced to the highest dignity; *in the midst of the throne*, in the centre of the celestial spirits. (2.) By his attendants, four beasts or living creatures, and four and twenty elders. He is encircled by glorious saints and angels. By this company is represented the church triumphant, consisting of the whole body of the faithful, who behold his glory and power, and receive consummate felicity from him. (3.) By having *seven*



*horns and seven eyes* ascribed to him. These denote his power and knowledge; for he is omnipotent and omniscient. Each of these horns and eyes is said to be *seven*, which being a perfect number, denotes he possesses these attributes in absolute perfection. (4.) By his posture, *He stood*. Sometimes Christ is represented as sitting, as Heb. i. 3. *He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*, pointing out the supereminent dignity to which he is advanced as Mediator, in reward of his bloody sufferings and death. Here he is represented as *standing*; which denotes his advocacy, or intercessory work. He is standing at the right hand of God, in the midst of the throne, agenting thy cause, O believer. This is the angel standing at the altar with a golden censer, offering up the prayers of all the saints, Rev. viii. 3. praying to the Father for them, and interceding in their behalf, that all the blessings of his purchase may be applied to them. By his standing is shewn how ready he is to appear for his people, to succour and help them in all their distresses, and to execute vengeance on all their enemies.

4. We have John's observation of the whole, *I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, &c. stood a Lamb as it had been slain*. In the beginning of the chapter he falls a-weeping that none was found worthy to loose the seals of the book. And here he gets this sight to comfort him. The Lamb revived his sinking spirits, and wiped away his tears. John had seen the Lamb many times before, as on the mount of transfiguration, in the garden, on the cross, after his resurrection, &c. but this was the sweetest and most delightful sight of him he had ever enjoyed. *I beheld, says he, and lo a Lamb*. O glorious sight! O that we had the eye of faith to behold this Lamb!

The doctrinal observation arising from the text is,

DOCT. *Christ the slain Lamb in the midst of the throne, is a sweet and comfortable sight to a mourning and disconsolate believer.*

In opening up this doctrine, I shall speak,

- I. Of the Lamb slain.
- II. Of the Lamb's being in the midst of the throne.
- III. Of the sweetness of this sight.
- IV. Apply.

I. I am to speak of *the Lamb slain*. And here I conceive are pointed out several things that merit our particular consideration.

*First*, It points out, that all the typical ceremonies were fulfilled in Christ. There was a lamb slain in the daily sacrifices, and at the passover, of which you read *Exod. xii.* Christ is the great passover on which you are called to feed to-morrow. I shall instance in the following things wherein the passover typified Christ the Lamb of God.

1. The paschal lamb behoved to be without blemish, *Exod. xii. 5.* Hence, as some think, one of the reasons why the Israelites tied this lamb to the posts of their beds for some days before it was slain, was to see if they could discern any blemish in it. Whatever be in this, it is plain it behoved the lamb to be without blemish. This was typical of the purity and holiness of the Redeemer. Peter tells us he was *a lamb without spot and blemish*, *1 Pet. i. 19.* He was perfectly free from all sin, which is the spot and blemish of the soul. Hence saith Paul, *Heb. vii. 26. 27.* "Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself." He was indeed manifested to take away sin, but in him was no sin at all.

2. The lamb was to be a male; which shews the excellency of strength and dignity (which mostly belongs to that sex) that is in Christ. The most excel-



lent person in heaven or earth was pitched upon to be a propitiation for poor sinners.

3. It was to be taken on the tenth day of the month, and kept till the fourteenth : during which time the Israelites were to look upon it, and remember their sorrows in Egypt, and be the more thankful for their deliverance. So Christ, when he was set apart for a sacrifice, was not immediately offered, but lived some time in the world, bound with cords and sorrows ; and the fourth year after entering on his public ministry, he was sacrificed for us.

4. The Israelites were to kill the lamb, in order to their eating of it. So it behoved Christ to die, ere he could appease the wrath of God, and satisfy divine justice ; that so we might have the benefit of his death.

5. The lamb was to be roasted at the fire, *Exod. xii. 9.* which holds out the extremity of his sufferings. Meat roasted at the fire is pierced with a spit thrust through it. Christ was nailed to the cross ; he was pierced with a spear ; the cross was the spit on which this Lamb was roasted at the fire of God's burning wrath, for our sins.

6. It was not to be eaten raw. This intimates, that we should not without due preparation receive the sacrament of Christ's blessed body and blood, nor have unbecoming conceptions of him in that solemn ordinance.

7. The lamb was to be all eaten, and that with unleavened bread and bitter herbs ; shewing, that as there is nothing in Christ unprofitable, or to be rejected, so we should receive a whole Christ, Christ in all his offices ; and by receiving him we must avoid all sin, and have our eyes full of tears, and our hearts full of sorrows, for our sins that were the procuring causes of his sufferings.

8. A bone of the lamb was not to be broken ; so Christ's bones were not broken on the cross, as those of the malefactors were, according to the usual custom.

9. The blood of it was to be sprinkled on the door-

posts. So the blood of Christ must be sprinkled on the conscience, to purge it from dead works.

10. The blood of the lamb was a defence to the Israelites against the destroying angel. So Christ is a defence against the wrath of God, the malediction of the law, and the curse of the broken covenant of works.

11. Upon the Jews eating the lamb, they were delivered immediately from the Egyptian bondage. So upon a sinner's believing in Christ, which is called *eating his flesh*, and *drinking his blood*, he is delivered from the slavery of sin and Satan, and made one of Christ's free men.

Secondly, It points out the sufferings of Christ, which have these three things in them.

1. His sufferings were in the room and place of another. It is called a sacrifice, which was for another person. So his soul was made an offering for us, in our room. *God did send forth his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. He was made a propitiation for us. The cloud of wrath that hung over all the elect, came pouring down upon him in all its fury. So that he suffered not merely as an example, as the pestilent Socinians say, but in our room and stead, *the just for the unjust*, 1 Pet. iii. 10.

2. His sufferings were extremely severe. Men are not slain without great pain. From the cradle to the cross, our Redeemer was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and, like a ship in a stormy sea, was tossed between wind and water. He suffered from the rage of wicked men and devils, and at the hand of God the Father, Is. liii. 10. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief." Zech. xii. 7. "Awake; O sword, against my shepherd; and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd." These tides so meeting, tossed the Redeemer, so that at last they sunk him beneath the mighty waves. This you may



see represented in the sacramental elements. The grape is bruised and squeezed; the wheat is threshed, roasted in the kiln, and broken between the mill-stones. So Christ trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath alone, and of the people there was none with him. He was *bruised for our iniquities*, Is. liii. 5. How severely was Christ dealt with! When he comes before the judge, he finds no mercy. In the garden he is in an agony, and sweats drops of blood. He cries out, "Now is my soul sorrowful even unto death." None in heaven or earth could have borne what he did. If the storm that he encountered had blown into the face of an angel, it would have entirely overpowered him. He gets a cup put into his hands by his murderers, mixed with vinegar and gall; but a much more bitter cup by his Father, which it behoved him to drink to the bottom. He begins to taste this cup; but his holy human nature faints under the load, so that an angel is dispatched from heaven to strengthen him.

3. His being killed. The justice of God would have no less price than the death of the Surety, who had substituted himself in the room of guilty sinners. Without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sin. The Surety's death must go for it. God exacted all the debt of the elect from him, and he paid the round sum in full tale that we were liable to. Divine justice attached him, and did not abate one farthing of the debt owing by those for whom he engaged. And this he paid to the full, in yielding a perfect obedience to the law, and suffering the penalty thereof: in evidence of which he cried on the cross, *It is finished*.

*Thirdly*, This expression, *the Lamb slain*, points out the freshness of Christ's sufferings. They are fresh and lively in their virtue and memory, as fresh as when he accomplished his decease at Jerusalem. The memory of his bloody death subsists to this day, and will never die throughout all the ages of eternity. It

is fresh in the churches of Christ, and in the thoughts of all who partake of the benefits thereof. We are met this day to revive the remembrance of it. Christ's death is remembered with due honour in heaven; his blood is the chief note in the song of the redeemed; and the angelic hosts sing perpetual Hallelujahs in honour of him who was slain. When our High Priest ascended to heaven, he entered into the holiest of all, with the blood of the sacrifice he had offered, and carried the names of all the people for whom it was shed with him. On his glorious entrance all the saints and angels welcome him as a triumphant conqueror; and he presents himself to the Father with these words, "Behold I, and the children whom thou hast given me." And he presents his blood in his continual intercession for his people. His pierced hands, head, and side, and every wound his blessed body received, are like so many mouths pleading at the mercy-seat. He holds up his wounds like a soldier in a triumphal procession, as so many trophies and tokens of his victory, which he urges as arguments in behalf of poor elect sinners, for whom he was wounded and bruised.

II. I come now to speak to the Lamb's being *in the midst of the throne*. It holds forth,

1. The great glory put upon him, as a reward of his being slain by the sword of justice for his people. When he tabernacled among men, he gave his disciples a glimpse of his glory; but that was extremely faint in comparison of that which they behold in him when set down as triumphant King on his throne. When he was to ascend to heaven, a cloud is sent down as a chariot to conduct him to his royal palace, where he is celebrated with loud acclamations of praise. When he assumed human nature, and was born of a virgin, in a stable at Bethlehem, a company of the heavenly host celebrate that remarkable birth of the Prince of the kings of the earth with



a song, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth  
 "peace, good-will towards men." When he ascended  
 triumphantly to glory, after having finished the  
 work given him to do, that panegyric was sung  
 in honour of him, which you have, Psal. xlvii. 5. 6.  
 "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the  
 "sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing  
 "praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises."  
 When this triumphant Conqueror ascended through  
 the air, a shout was made that caused all the arches of  
 heaven ring; and a song began which shall never have  
 a period.—He was received in at the gates of the hea-  
 venly city; they were set wide open to admit this  
 King of glory; and all the heavenly host welcomed  
 him with songs on their golden harps, as the Son of  
 God, and God-man, who had triumphed over all his  
 enemies, and was now entering on his glory.—When  
 admitted in this triumphant manner into the new Je-  
 rusalem, he is, as Mediator, exalted to the most su-  
 preminent dignity; he is placed on the throne of  
 God, in the midst of the throne. He is set as it were  
 at the head of the table, encircled with the heavenly  
 host. When he was on earth, he was fixed to a cross,  
 with a malefactor on every hand of him. But in hea-  
 ven he is admitted to the highest pitch of glory, and  
 attended with a glorious retinue, the four beasts, or  
 living creatures, the four and twenty elders, myriads  
 of angels, and an innumerable company out of all na-  
 tions, tongues, and kindreds of the earth. See mag-  
 nificent descriptions of our exalted Redeemer, Rev. i.  
 13.—16. & xix. 11.—16. O that we may now be-  
 hold his glory in his word and ordinances, that at last  
 we may be admitted to behold him exalted on his  
 throne.

2. The great power he is invested with. He has all  
 power in heaven and in earth: "God hath highly ex-  
 "alted him, and given him a name above every name,  
 "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of  
 "things in heaven, and things in earth, and things

“under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” He is exalted above all principalities and powers; he has the keys of hell and of death; he is clothed in state; having a rod of iron in his hand to break his adversaries, a sceptre of righteousness to rule his willing subjects, and a crown upon his head, even many crowns, to display his grandeur and magnificence. He is Lord of the church and of the world, and will reign till all his enemies be made his footstool.

3. His usefulness to his people. He overtakes all his splendid retinue; he is not hid, all may see him, and behold his beauty. The three disciples saw him transformed upon mount Tabor, attended by Moses and Elias; but now they see him upon the heavenly mount Zion, like the sun diffusing light, life, and joy to all his people, both in heaven and earth, being the source of blessings, and the head of government and influences to them all.

III. The third head is to speak of the sweetness of this sight. That it is a most delectable thing to have a sight of the Lamb in the midst of the throne, will appear, if ye consider,

1. What he is. There are many glorious and magnificent sights in the world, but this exceeds them all. He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. The glory of God shines more brightly in Jesus Christ than in all the creation. No wonder then if John gazed, and cried out, *Behold — a Lamb as it had been slain*, when he saw the heir of all things, the first-born of every creature, arrayed in glory in the midst of the throne. How splendid a thing would it be to behold the heir of an earthly king, the prince-royal, arrayed in his royal robes, with the crown sparkling with gems and jewels on his head, and a golden sceptre in his hand, mount his throne, attended with a numerous multitude of his



grandees! But to behold the Heir of all things, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the King of kings and Lord of lords, seated on his throne of glory; how ravishing and comforting a thing must it be!

2. Where he is. He sits on the throne, the place of the highest dignity, making intercession for the elect. He is seated there to rule, dispose of, and provide for his people; to manage all their concerns, and confer all the blessings of his purchase upon them. He is on his throne, and in due time he will give to them to sit with him on his throne, and make them kings and priests to him. O, get a sight of this exalted Lamb by faith.

3. How refreshing this sight must be. How did the glorious appearance of Christ when transfigured before three of his disciples, ravish their hearts, saying, "It is good for us to be here!" How do the saving views of him in ordinances cherish and revive the drooping spirits of believers! It makes their bitter waters sweet to them. But how much more refreshing and exhilarating must the sight of Christ be to all the redeemed in the other world, who shall see him as he is, and be ravished with his glory for ever!

4. How consolatory it has been to the Lord's people, when brought to the gates of death, and the threshold of glory, to get a sight of the Lamb. Then they are made to sing that swan-like song, "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." How did that godly man Mr Josiah Wells triumph in death! When visited by Mr Livingston, a worthy minister, and asked, how he did? he cried out, "Victory, victory!" and after a pause exclaimed again, "Victory, victory for evermore!" A godly minister in our land reports of the blessed, zealous, and faithful Mr Rutherford, that he spoke like one come out of heaven, and not like one going to it: "Passe,

"I feel, I see, I joy, I rejoice!" O the peaceful exit and easy death of one that sees the Lamb of God with an eye of faith, and perceives him ready to receive him to his glory! Mr Palmer, a martyr, in the bloody Marian days, when all thought he was burnt quite dead at the stake, was heard to cry out in the flames, *Sweet Jesus!* How does the sight of Christ rejoice the hearts of believers, even the sight of him to whom the elders are singing unceasing Hallelujahs! He is the sole object that ravishes the heart. Some saints have been long looking on the Lamb, but have not got nor will ever get their fill of looking on him. There is still something of glory and majesty in him that they can never reach to the bottom of; and in this delightful employment of searching and diving into his glory will they be busied for ever.

I come now to apply this delightful subject.

1. Is it so that Christ the slain Lamb in the midst of the throne is a sweet and ravishing sight? how great is the dignity of the human nature, in being allowed to have so near and clear views of the glorious Redeemer! The angels must stand at a distance, and cover their faces with their wings, when they come into the divine presence. Whereas man is allowed a nearer prospect, and exalted to a higher dignity than angels, in regard Christ has assumed their nature, is bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. O how much is human nature dignified by this assumption!

2. Is the Lamb on the throne? Then the law is magnified and made honourable, and divine justice is completely satisfied, for the injury they both received by the sins of an elect world. The gates of heaven had been shut against the whole race of Adam, if the Lamb, by his perfect obedience and complete satisfaction, had not merited heaven and glory for those who were given him of the Father. But now that he is received into glory, and seated on the throne of his majesty, as the Surety and Representative of his people.



ple, it is not only an evidence, that the work of man's salvation is completed as to purchase, but that all his redeemed people shall in their time be also admitted to the same felicity.

3. Is the Lamb on the throne? Then he is in the better case to defend his people, and to afford them succour amidst all their trials and difficulties. The devil, by inducing our first parents to break the positive law of God enjoined them, thought to have triumphed in the entire ruin of the whole human race; but behold our King has conquered him, and will shortly bruise Satan under the believers feet.

4. Here is good news to believers. If the Lamb be now exalted to the throne, then there is certain assurance that they also shall reign with him. The head is exalted, and the members must follow. His friends and followers shall be advanced to the same glory (in some respect) with him. *Where he is, there shall his servants be also*, John xiv. 3. Rev. iii. 21.

I proceed to an use of exhortation, Lift up your eyes, O believer, and behold your King on the throne. *I beheld*, says John, *and behold a Lamb*. Look to him; for,

1. He is the fairest sight in heaven. He is fairer than the sons of men, more glorious and excellent than all mountains of prey; the chief of ten thousand, and altogether lovely. One says, "Black sun and moon, but O fair Christ." Philosophers say there are spots in the sun and moon, but Christ is the spotless Lamb of God. He is the quintessence of beauty, the mirror of excellency, the centre of perfection, and a paradise of delight.

2. There is something in him beyond all other persons that ever you heard of or saw. He is the Ancient of days, the Father of eternity, from everlasting to everlasting God. Though he became an infant of days, and lay as a helpless babe in a cradle, was a man of sorrows, and well acquainted with the sinless infirmities of the human nature; yet his existence was from

eternity, his goings forth were from of old, from everlasting. Where is such a person to be found? who is his equal? I mean, who in heaven or earth can boast of an eternal duration, and yet a beginning of being in time? In this respect the Lamb of God has no competitor. It will be a very sweet thing to behold Adam, Enoch, Abraham, and all the venerable patriots of antiquity, in the celestial mansions, to be entertained with their history, to behold the beauty and excellency put upon them by their God and Redeemer, and the efficacy of the grace and satisfaction of a promised saviour in them. But much more satisfactory will it be to see and converse with him who said, *I am that I am*; and, *Before Abraham was I am*; who can and will unravel the mysteries of eternity, and unfold the secrets of redeeming love and grace.

3. He is looking on all of you to-day. On some he is looking with an eye of observation. There will not be a single person at his table to-morrow, but he will narrowly remark them and their behaviour. O, look to yourselves, and see that ye come to his table with the wedding-garment of the righteousness of this Lamb.—On some he is looking with an eye of lamentation and weeping, saying, “O sinner, if thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace!” As he wept when he stood by Martha and Mary, as he was going to raise Lazarus to life; so he is weeping over many dead sinners among us. O that, by a miracle of his grace, he would graciously bring dead sinners out of the grave of their natural state! O that that promise were fulfilled amongst us on this occasion, even at this hour, “The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live!”—On others this meek Lamb of God is looking with an eye of indignation, for their continued impenitency and obstinate unbelief, notwithstanding all he has done to bring them to accept the offers of his grace. O unbelieving sinner, who hast hitherto set at nought all



his counsel, and would none of his reproof, beware that he destroy thee not, as he did Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities on the plain of Jordan, and as he destroyed Pharaoh and his army in the Red sea. The least look of this Lamb when he is angry, the roaring of this Lion of the tribe of Judah, when his wrath is kindled but a little, will look thee into the infernal pit of destruction. O then kiss the Son, and be reconciled to him.

4. He is crying to you and every one of you, *Behold me, behold me!* and this cry he has been uttering to you for many days bygone. Has he then been crying to you so long, saying, *Look unto me all ye ends of the earth, and be saved?* as you love your own souls, and would desire to flee from the wrath to come, open your hearts and eyes to this merciful and compassionate Lamb of God, that he may take away and save you from your sins. Perhaps this may be the last cry of grace that he will vouchsafe to many of you. O therefore regard his voice, and consider what he says, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.

*Exhort. 2.* Come to this exalted Lamb at all times and in all straits, particularly in the seasons and cases following.

1. In the day of desertion and temptation. This was the practice of Old-testament believers: "They looked to him, and were lightened. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him; and saved him out of all his troubles," Psal. xxxiv. 5. 6. When Paul was buffeted by the messenger of Satan, he ran to the Lamb, and prayed for deliverance, and got a gracious answer, 2 Cor. xii. 7. 8. 9.

2. When thy conscience is sore wounded with sin and guilt, look to this Lamb, and thou shalt have relief: For *he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds*, Psal. cxlvii. 3.

3. In a day when thou gettest manifestations of his love and favour. When Stephen got a manifestation

of the glory of the Lamb, he cries out, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God," Acts vii. 55. 56.

4. In a day of persecution and trouble. Then come unto him for refreshing, liberty, and mercy, pleading his promise, Is. xxxii. 2. "A man shall be an hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest; as rivers of waters in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

5. Under all thy weakness and difficulties. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee,* Psal. lv. 22.

6. When thou art on a death-bed, going off the stage of the world, to be judged by the Lamb. At such an awful period come to him. For, (1.) He is a Lamb, meek and merciful. In him compassions flow. There are more bowels of compassion in him than in all the saints on earth, or the angels in heaven, nay than in the most affectionate fathers and mothers in the world. (2.) He is a slain Lamb; and this is your security. He has satisfied law and justice for you, so that the curse cannot touch you, and death is stripped of his sting. (3.) He knows all your difficulties and distresses. Some poor soul may be saying, "All the world knows not my miseries, perplexities, and the uneasiness that preys upon my heart." Come to this Lamb. My text tells you he has seven eyes. He knows all thy troubles, and thy secret groanings are not hid from him. There is not a tear falls from thine eyes, but he puts it in his bottle. (4.) He is a Lamb on the throne, and has all power in heaven and earth given unto him. He has both ability and will to help thee. He is able to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God through him. If there were seven devils in thee, as there were in Mary Magdalene, he can, with a word of his mouth, cast them all out. He suffered for thee on a cross, and he is this day on the throne agenting thy cause at the bar of God. Come then to him continually.



*Exhort.* 3. Reverence the Lamb, and his holy name. He is on the throne, and must be acknowledged with all possible adoration and homage. Ye that have been spitting in his face, and saying, We will not have this man to reign over us, I would speak a word, *first*, to you; and then, *secondly*, to such who can say, The Lamb is yours.

*First*, To you who have hitherto refused subjection to the Lamb.

1. Be afraid of him. All power is his. The angels cover their faces when they approach his presence, standing in awe of his glory and power. What need have ye then to fear lest his wrath break out against you, and he tear you in pieces like a devouring lion? Hell is trembling before him, and the very devils quake with terror at him.

2. Bow before him. Fall down before the Lamb, and say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? I will do any thing for thy honour." O my brethren, fear and tremble before him; for though he be a meek Lamb, yet the day is coming, when he will be a roaring lion to devour you, if you do not come to him by faith, and receive him as the propitiation for your sins.

3. Submit to this Lamb of God: for he has a day of wrath abiding you, if you repent not. His fury will burn against you, that have been lifting up weapons against him, or his people and interest in the world. He has a rod of iron to break them to pieces. I have read of an emperor of Germany, who vowed he would ride to the spurs in the blood of the saints; and that very day he lay weltering in his own blood, and died.

4. Yield to and receive the Lamb as your Saviour; for he is now upon the throne; and behold he will descend thence to judge the world, and you among the rest. What will become of thee, O sinner, if thou be at enmity with him then? Some drops of his anger are already felt, and more will be poured out on the

wicked at the last day. This is but the beginning of their sorrows. God's heralds have been warning you, that you must soon appear before his tribunal; they have sounded the trumpet, and cried, "Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him; and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." O how terrible will that coming be to you, when you shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the Lord's sake then, and your own souls sake, be persuaded to come to and believe in the Lamb of God, while he stands in the gospel with outstretched arms ready to embrace you, saying, *Look unto me, and be saved.*

Secondly, I shall speak a word to you who can say, the Lamb is yours; and so conclude.

1. Sing to the honour of the Lamb. Begin your heavenly exercise, and sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. It will be your wisdom and interest to be anticipating your work, and learning beforehand some of these songs of Zion, even when you are in this strange land: and if grace hath taken an effectual dealing with your hearts, you are joining with those harpers that stand with the Lamb on mount Zion, and with the angels, the living creatures, and elders about the throne, Rev. v. 12. saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. i. 5. 6. And though you may go through great tribulation and afflictions here, yet you are on your way to the heavenly Canaan, and shall at last stand with the hundred and forty and four thousand that are with the Lamb



on the heavenly mount Sion, all having their Father's name written in their foreheads.

2. Follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, thro' adversity as well as prosperity. The Lamb is, in the course of providence, like to be going through blood in this kingdom. Then do not desert him; for if ye suffer with him, ye shall reign with him also. He will conduct you to the throne, whither he is gone to prepare a place of rest for you, after all your weary travels and troubles in this world.

3. As he carries the lambs in his bosom, O carry him in your heart. Say with the spouse, Cant. i. 13. "A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts." Let him be in your hearts, and he will carry you through all difficulties, yea through the valley of the shadow of death, and fairly land you on the pleasant banks of Immanuel's land. As I overcame, says he, and am set down with my Father on his throne, so shall ye, if ye overcome, sit down with me on my throne. O that the day would quickly come, when the shadows shall flee away, and we shall be admitted to that glorious place whereof the Lamb is the delight, Rev. xxi. 23. "who shall lead his people unto fountains of living waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," Rev. vii. 17.

## DISCOURSE VIII.

### The Song of Moses and the Lamb \*.

REVELATION XV. 2. 3.

*And I saw as it were a sea of glass, mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.*

**I**T was the honour of Moses, who was God's peculiar favourite, (Deut. xxxiv. 10.), to be penman of the first book of the Old Testament. And it was the honour of John, who was Christ's peculiar favourite, (Joh. xxi. 20.), to be penman of the last book of the New Testament. O what divine love and favour is made known unto the church in all the volumes that are betwixt the arms of these two favourites!

Time will not allow me to consider the matter of this mysterious book in general; and therefore we pass it, and come close to the words of the text: which that we may the better understand, we are to know, that those who are acquainted with the Jewish customs, say, that, after the passover, they sang six psalms, viz. from the 113th to the 118th inclusively. This they call their great Hallelujah.

We have also our days of thanksgiving after the sacrament, which we call our eucharist, or our great

\* This sermon was preached at Aberbrothock, April 13. 1719. on Monday after the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper.



Hallelujah-day. Christ did (*ευχαριστας*) give thanks, Luke xxii. 19. and so the apostle Paul says he did, 1 Cor. xi. 24. One would think, if this song of Moses and the Lamb were ever to be sung, it would be on this great Hallelujah-day, after this solemn ordinance you have been partakers of, which is the very gate to heaven and the entry to glory.

In this chapter John has a vision, and in it he sees the deliverance of the church from Antichrist, and he hears the church singing on account of her deliverance: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." So here you have the church militant singing like the church triumphant, upon account of the fall of the spiritual Babylon.

For explaining the words, consider,

1. Who are this company of singers.
2. What is their song.

1. Who are this blessed company of singers. They are described three ways.

(1.) By their victory over the beast.

(2.) By the place whereon they stand.

(3.) By what they had in their hands.

(1.) They are described by their victory over the beast. This blessed company were such as through grace were kept from the abominations of Antichrist, and who, by the almighty power of God, were at last delivered from his tyranny and oppression.

(2.) They are described by the place whereon they stand: *And they stood as it were on a sea of glass.* Some by this sea of glass understand the church of Christ, which is compared to a sea of glass in respect of the glory she is advanced to. Others understand by it those who were cleansed by the blood of Christ, as in chap. xii. you read of some who *overcame* the beast by the blood of the Lamb, that is, by the efficacy thereof, having it imputed to them for their justifying righteousness; when others trusting to their own righteousness, and listening to the insinuations of the

locusts employed by Antichrist, were turned aside. The blood and righteousness of Christ is that sure and immoveable foundation upon which the true church of Christ is built, and on which she will stand firm for ever. Others, again, understand by this sea of glass the crystalline streets of the new Jerusalem, which are like transparent glass, as you will see in chap. xxi. of this book. I am not to exclude any of these senses; but would only say, that it was by virtue of the blood of Christ that this happy company overcame, and therefore sang; and all those who are or shall be conquerors by this blood, shall be employed in singing forth the praises of God to all eternity.

(3.) They are described by what they had in their hands: They had *the harps of God* in their hands. They are called the harps of God on a double account.

[1.] To denote their excellency, as Psal. lxxx. 10. we read of *goodly cedars*, or, as on the margin, *cedars of God*; that is, excellent cedars. This is an Hebraism, denoting excellent, or the best cedars.

[2.] To denote, that they were given them by God, and were tuned by him. By him they were put into their hands, the song was put into their mouths, and joy and gladness into their hearts.

2. Let us consider what is the song of this blessed company. It is described two ways. (1.) More generally, by the name of it, *the song of Moses and of the Lamb*. (2.) More particularly, by the subject-matter of it: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

1<sup>st</sup>, This song is described more generally by its name, *the song of Moses and the Lamb*.

(1.) It is called the song of Moses, Exod. xv. and that on a twofold account. [1.] Because Moses was the composer of it. [2.] Because he was one of the fingers of it with the church.

The church militant is said to sing this song of Moses on a double account.



[1.] They sing on the very same occasion that the church did sing in the time of Moses. The church then sang the praises of God, because they were delivered out of Egypt. So the church in the text sings upon the like account, when they are delivered from spiritual Egypt.

[2.] They sing to the same purpose; they have the same subject-matter of singing, that they had in the days of Moses, viz. glorious displays of the goodness, wisdom, power, holiness, &c. of the great Jehovah.

(2.) This song is called *the song of the Lamb*; and that, as I conceive, upon a threefold account.

[1.] Because by his blood they overcame; they were victorious in and through him. It is *the Lion of the tribe of Judah* that overturned Babylon, and has given victory to his church. It is he that has wrought and brought about their deliverance.

[2.] Because the Lamb is the object thereof, as you may see from Rev. vii. 10. "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

[3.] Because the Lamb is the subject-matter of their song; they sing the praises of the Lamb.

2dly, This song is described more particularly by the subject-matter of it: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

Here are two things as the subject-matter of their song.

(1.) They extol the glorious attributes of God here spoken of, as the great Jehovah, the Lord God Almighty, and the King of saints.

(2.) They proclaim the works of God as great and marvellous, and his ways as just and true.

Although the church of God has many weeping and sighing times here below, yet you may see she has her singing times also, as in the text.

There are three special times wherein the church of God did or shall sing,

1. The first was after her deliverance from Egypt: for then she was in great straits, in seemingly inextricable difficulties. She was betwixt Migdol and the Red sea, and before Pihahiroth. Mountains of rocks were on every side, the Red sea was before them, and the host of the Egyptians behind them, saying, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them." In this extremity it pleased the Lord to make a way for his ransomed to escape: for the Red sea divided asunder, the waters stood as an heap on each side, the floods lay congealed as mountains of brass on every hand, till the church of God did fairly pass through. Then the mountains of waters tumbled down upon the Egyptians, and swallowed them up in the devouring floods; and Israel with pleasure beheld their corpses lying in heaps on the Arabian shore. Then they leaped for joy on the other side, and said, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

2. The second special time of the church's singing will be, when she shall be delivered from the Romish Antichrist. Did the church sing on account of her deliverance from temporal Egypt? much more will she sing over again *the song of Moses the servant of God*, with the addition of *the song of the Lamb*, when she shall be delivered from spiritual Antichrist.

3. The third special time of the church's singing will be when she shall be fairly landed in Immanuel's land. The church's redemption from Egyptian and Romish bondage is but a faint type of her redemption that shall then be completed, when she shall safely arrive in the land of glory, as here in the text. It is more than an allusion to the church's singing in heaven, when she shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Although it would seem from the scope of the words, that the song made mention of here is the song of the church militant, yet the church mili-



tant is represented like the church triumphant singing; and her song is borrowed from the saints in heaven.

The doctrine arising from the words is,

*Doctr. When the church and people of God shall be fairly landed in heaven, then it shall be their work to sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, and to rejoice therein.*

In speaking to this doctrine, I shall,

I. Offer some considerations for illustrating of this truth, That the work of the church and people of God in heaven will be singing and rejoicing.

II. Endeavour to open up and explain this song.

III. Shew whence it comes to pass that the saints will sing and rejoice in heaven.

IV. Draw some inferences from the whole.

I. I am to offer some considerations for illustrating this great truth, That the work of the saints in heaven will be to sing and rejoice.

1. Consider, that the resurrection is called the morning of singing, or a morning of joy, Psal. xxx.

5. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," or, as on the margin, "singing cometh in the morning." And so Psal. cxxvi.

5. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," or in singing, as on the margin.

2. Consider the names and designations that are given to heaven and the work of the saints there, and we shall very clearly see that the work of the saints in that place will be to sing and rejoice. They are said to enter into their Master's joy, Matth. xxv. 21. Paul expected "joy and a crown of rejoicing at the coming of the Lord." In Is. xxxv. ult. we read, that "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads:

*Disc. 8. The Song of Moses and the Lamb.* 273

“they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and fighting shall flee away.”

3. Consider, that the people of God have their notes of singing and rejoicing here in time. If they begin to sing upon account of a begun deliverance, much more will they do so when their deliverance is completed, and the glorious day of their full redemption is come, and well-tuned-harps are put in their hands for this end. Now joy is in the bud, but then it will blossom with never fading verdure.

4. Consider the songs mentioned in this book of the Revelation, which though, according to the opinion of many interpreters, they be the songs of the church in her present fighting condition, yet have a manifest reference to the songs of the redeemed in their triumphant state. The song is begun here, but shall be perfected in heaven. The height of felicity includes in it joy; and it is impossible, that those who are in perfect happiness, should cease to rejoice.

Thus it appears, that when the saints come to heaven, their work will be to sing and rejoice.

II. The next thing proposed, was to offer some particulars for opening up and explaining this song.

But before I enter upon this, there are three things that I would premise.

1. That it is a great subject, and we are both unworthy and unfit to speak of it, and perhaps some, if not many of you, to hear it.

2. That all the wits in the world cannot fully explain the subject of this song. When we are fairly arrived in Immanuel's land, and have the harps of God put in our hands, then we shall be made eye and ear witnesses to those things, of which we have now but a very faint and imperfect conception.

3. That seeing grace is glory begun, and the song of believers in time is the song of heaven begun, we may from thence learn a little of the nature of this song of Moses and the Lamb.



So what we are to say concerning this song, we shall take it from the song of Moses the servant of the Lord, from the psalms of David, from the songs of the church in this book of the Revelation, and from some notes of the songs of believers, as they are dropt here and there in scripture, and the work of the saints in heaven as described in that sacred book. In opening up this song of Moses and the Lamb, we will speak to these six things following.

1. We will offer some meditations concerning this blessed company of singers.
2. Speak a little of the place wherein they are singing.
3. Shew the object of their praise.
4. Explain the subject-matter of their song.
5. Condescend upon some notes of this sweet song.
6. Shew after what manner they sing this song.

*First*, I am to offer some meditations concerning this blessed company of singers.

1. We find this company will be a very great company. Here will be thousands of thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, all harping out the praises of God throughout eternal ages. There are an innumerable number, a number that no man can number, gathered out of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and languages, to make up one glorious assembly, to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb through all eternity. This appears from Rev. xi. which you may read at your leisure.

2. They are a glorious company. They are arrayed with glory, every one of them shining like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. They sit upon thrones, and wear crowns of glory. They have the harps of God put in their hands, for singing their songs of glory.

3. For as glorious as this company now are, they were once stained with sin as well as others. Though they now sing, they once wept by the rivers of Babylon. You will see an account of them, Rev. vii. 14.

"These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." It is not said, These are they who had a prosperous gale in the world, or enjoyed the affluence and smiles of the world, but they who came out of great tribulation. The way to heaven is a way of tribulation and distress, and this company were once travellers thitherward amidst many trials and troubles. While sojourners here, they had their heart plagues, fears, and doubts, as well as you. They were a party of Adam's guilty race, by nature liable to condemnation and wrath; but they got their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, being thereby freed from condemnation and the curse of the law; and they are now clothed in white robes, and have palms in their hands, in token of their victory over sin, Satan, and the world, through the blood of the Lamb.

*Secondly*, I proceed to speak a little of the place in which this blessed company chant their song.

It is called the new Jerusalem, the city and temple of God; the palace of the eternal King, and the place prepared for all the redeemed from among men; the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. You may see a description of this high and holy place, Rev. xxi. The wall of this city hath twelve foundations; and the foundations of it are garnished with all manner of precious stones. It hath twelve gates consisting of twelve pearls, and each gate of one entire pearl. And the very streets of the city are pure gold, like transparent crystal. No metaphor can represent the glory of this blessed abode of the great God, his angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. No man is able to conceive its glory and splendor, though he had the most elevated ideas; and the most sublime figures and metaphors, drawn from the most excellent things obvious to the senses of men.



cannot hold out the glory of this happy place, where this blessed company are singing.

*Thirdly*, I shall next shew the object of this song. They do not sing to themselves, but to the great God, saying as Psal. cxv. 1. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."

They do not sing this song to angels, those glorious creatures that excel in wisdom and strength. No; for angels were their attendants while on earth, and are assistants to them in this song. And we find they disclaim all kind of homage being paid them, Rev. xxii. 9.

But they sing this song of praise to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, intermingling distinct notes to each of these glorious and adorable persons, according to their several parts in the œconomy of redemption.

We may well suppose they sing to God the Father, in the words of Paul, Eph. i. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." They praise and extol him as the contriver of salvation, as having devised and formed the plan of saving a select number of the ruined posterity of fallen Adam, pitching his love upon them from everlasting ages, and predestinating them to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, unto the praise of the glory of his grace.

They sing praises to God the Son; and we may conceive their song to be in these terms, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever, Amen, Rev. i. 5. 6. "Salvation to our God, who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever," Rev. vii. 10. "Thou art worthy, &c. for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." They extol and praise his amazing and

matchless love, in condescending to assume our nature into personal union with himself, in his voluntary undertaking to be their Saviour and Redeemer, in fulfilling the law in their stead, and suffering the penalty thereof, paying their whole debt, and making over the benefit of it to them. Every act of his obedience, every instance of his bloody sufferings, accents and elevates their song.

And they sing praises to God the Holy Ghost, as the Comforter and Applier of salvation, for all the influences of his grace, all the communications of his favour, and all the sweet consolations wherewith he refreshes the spirits of his people.

And may we not suppose the following to be the song they sing to all the three persons, as united in one Godhead, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen?"

*Fourthly*, I proceed to consider a little the subject-matter of the song of this blessed company. And this we take up in the following particulars.

1. They make a song of the glorious excellencies of God. The subject-matter of their song is the attributes and excellencies of God, which they extol with never-ceasing praises, as in the text. They extol him as God Almighty, and King of saints. They magnify him as the God of salvation, Rev. vii. 10.; as the wise God, and God only wise, 1 Tim. i. 17.; his power, saying, "The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is his name; The Lord God omnipotent reigneth;" his holiness, singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory; and, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" his truth and faithfulness, *Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.*

2. They ascribe all that is glorious to God, of which you have specimens in the passages already ci-



ted, Rev. i. 5. 6. & vii. 10. and v. 12. 13. "Worthy  
 "is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and  
 "riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour,  
 "and glory, and blessing. And every creature which  
 "is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth,  
 "and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,  
 "heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory,  
 "and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne,  
 "and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." It is their  
 work to ascribe all that is glorious and excellent to  
 God, to divest the creation as it were of all its glory and  
 beauty, and to ascribe all to him; and to employ all  
 the creatures to bless and praise him.

3. It is their work to proclaim and extol the works  
 of God; his works of mercy and judgement; his  
 works of mercy to the godly, and his works of judge-  
 ment to his enemies. They proclaim the righteous  
 judgement of God, as in the text, *Great and marvel-  
 lous are thy works, Lord God Almighty*. What are those  
 works? The pulling down of his enemies. In Rev.  
 xix. 1. we read of a great company in heaven, say-  
 ing, "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour,  
 "and power unto the Lord our God." What is the  
 reason of this? Why, ver. 2, "For true and righ-  
 "teous are his judgements; for he hath judged the  
 "great whore," &c.

4. It will be a great part of the matter of their song,  
 to invite others to come and praise him. They do not  
 only praise him themselves, but they invite others to  
 join with them in the pleasant work. This was the  
 practice of the psalmist David himself while on earth;  
 as in Psal. ciii. when he had praised the Lord himself,  
 he invites angels and all other creatures to come and  
 praise him, ver. 20. 21. 22. "Bless the Lord, ye his  
 "angels, that excel in strength, that do his com-  
 "mandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word,  
 "Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye ministers of  
 "his that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his  
 "works in all places of his dominion; bless the Lord,

"O my soul." And in Psal. cxlviii. he is more particular in inviting all the creatures to praise the Lord. He invites the angels, the sun, the moon, the stars, the heaven of heavens, &c. to come and help him in this work; as if he had said, "I find it a work too hard for me, and therefore I would not only have angels, those pure and intelligent substances, to join with me; but I would wish to see the dead and inanimate parts of the creation inspired with life, to assist me in this song of praise to the Lord of heaven and earth."

We conceive that the over-word of their song will be *Hallelujah*. It is an Hebrew word, and signifies, *Praise the Lord*, or, *Praise ye the God of Jacob*. I conceive the work of the saints in heaven will be to invite others to praise him. The word *Hallelujah* seems to import four things.

1. When it is the over-word of their song, it imports their great desire to have the Lord praised. "How," says the soul, "how shall I get the Lord praised? What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits bestowed upon me? Therefore, ye angels that excel in strength, and all creatures in heaven and earth, come and help me to praise him."

2. When *Hallelujah* is the over-word of their song, it imports, that, notwithstanding of all that they can do in the praising of the Lord, yet God is still above all their praises; he is exalted above all blessing and praise. Every one of them says, "The more I endeavour to praise him as I can, yet he is far above all my praises: therefore, ye angelic hosts, and all other creatures that dropt from his creating hands, come and assist me to praise him."

3. When *Hallelujah* is the over-word of their song, it imports the great and prevailing desire of their hearts to praise him in a decent and acceptable manner.

4. When it is the over-word of their song, it imports the great joy they have in their hearts at singing their song. They begin with it and end with it. It



imports, that there will be loud acclamations attending it; and at every note their hearts will be filled with the highest raptures of pure joy and ecstatic delight.

*Fifthly*, I come now to condescend on some notes of the song of the saints in heaven; and these I shall gather from passages of the sacred scriptures.

1. Then I conceive, that this blessed company of harpers will sing and say, "Glory, glory, glory to God, that ever he became my God, my covenanted God, after the first covenant with our original parents was broken. Blessed be God, that ever he made over himself to me in a covenant of grace ordered in all things and sure, that standeth fast in Christ. Hallelujah."

2. Another note of their song may be, "Glory, glory, glory to God for everlasting love. Amen. Hallelujah." You may see this note in their song, Rev. i. 5. 6. *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, &c.* Don't ye think that the saints in heaven will say and sing, "Blessed be God for everlasting love; blessed be God, that ever he set his love upon me, and passed by many others; that ever he wrote down my name in the book of life; that ever he gifted me to Christ to be redeemed and saved by him. Amen. Hallelujah?"

3. Another note may be, "Glory, glory, glory to God, that ever he bestowed Christ, his unspeakable gift, upon us." Don't ye think that Paul will say in heaven, as he said while on earth, *Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.* Will not every one of the saints in heaven say, "Blessed be God for Christ; glory to God, that ever he parted with him to be a Saviour to me, to poor worthless me; that ever his Son came into the world to die, and shed his precious blood for me the vilest of human creatures. Amen. Hallelujah?"

4. A fourth note may be, "Glory to God, and to the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood," Rev. v. 9. "Worthy is

“ he to receive all glory and honour, and to be celebrated with never-ceasing praises.”

5. Another note may be, “ Glory, &c. to God for converting grace. Amen. Hallelujah.” You will see this note in the song of the great apostle of the Gentiles. In 1 Tim. i. from ver. 11. he is giving an account of what he was before conversion, a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious; and yet he was converted. *This is a faithful saying, says he, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.* Upon this his heart rises to such a pitch of thankfulness, that he falls a-praising of God, ver. 17. *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.* Don’t ye therefore think that Paul will cheerfully repeat that note in heaven, “ Blessed be God for converting grace!”

There are three sorts of believers that will never forget their conversion in heaven.

(1.) Those who got grace to embrace and close with Christ in their young and tender years. Those who were converted from their youth, will sing and say, “ Blessed be God who engaged me to give away the first of my time, and of my heart and love, unto him. Blessed be God, that he got the first room in my heart; that he did not leave me to run on in sin as many others did, but converted me early, making me a monument of his distinguishing love. Amen. Hallelujah.”

(2.) Another sort of converts that will never forget converting grace, are such as have been converted after they had fallen into the most gross and scandalous sins. Can Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, and Paul, ever forget, that when they were going to hell, the Lord mercifully put a stop to their sinning, and falling into everlasting destruction, by his converting grace? Will they not for ever sing and say, “ Glory to God that ever he prevented us in our furious



“career to hell, and called us by his all-powerful  
“grace? Amen. Hallelujah.”

(3.) A third sort of believers that will never forget their conversion, are such as were converted when they were dying, when on the very brink of eternity, and just ready to fall into the infernal Tophet. Will the thief on the cross ever forget his conversion, think ye? Surely he will say, “Blessed be God who  
“savingly converted me some few moments before I  
“stepped out of time into eternity. If I had died in  
“that dismal state in which Christ found me, I had  
“been lost for ever. Amen. Hallelujah.”

6. Another note may be, That they will sing and say, “Glory, glory, glory to God for the pardon of  
“sin.” This is a mercy that the people of God will never forget. That will ever be a fresh note in their song, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, &c.* The removal of the guilt and defiling stain of sin will ever be uppermost in their thoughts, and accent their song. David could say, as the words run in the original, *Psal. xxxii. 1. 2.*  
“O the blessednesses of the man whose transgression is  
“forgiven, whose sin is covered. O the happiness  
“of the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not ini-  
“quity.” So *Psal. ciii. 2. 3.* “Bless the Lord, O  
“my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” Why?  
what is the matter? *who forgiveth all thine iniquities.* This is a most voluminous mercy, a mother-blessing, from whose fruitful womb many mercies flow. And seeing they are much affected with it here, do you think they will ever forget it in heaven? No; they will ever have a sweet and relishing remembrance of it, and make it the subject-matter of their exalted song.

7. Another note may be, “Glory, glory, glory to  
“God for the sweet and delightful ordinances of wor-  
“ship that we did enjoy in the wilderness.” They will not forget the Lord’s way with them, how he revived, enlightened, and comforted them by the ordinances of his own institution, and that amidst all

their troubles they had God's word and his house of prayer to run to as a rich treasure of consolation and support. They can never forget the sweet blinks of his countenance, the ravishing manifestations of his love, and the delightful displays of his grace, in his word and ordinances. "He sent his word and healed me," will the soul say. "Amen. Hallelujah."

8. Another note of their song may be, "Glory, glory, glory to God for the rod of correction, for the chastisements he laid upon me." Job could say, *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord.* May we not suppose, that the people of God in heaven will reflect upon the Lord's way of dealing with them in this world, how he laid many rods and chastisements upon them, to reclaim them from wandering from him, to deaden them to temporal things, to kill their corruptions, and purge out their dross; how he cast them into the furnace of affliction, and sometimes made it seven times hotter than usual, ere it accomplished the end he had in view by throwing them into it; how he took away near and dear relations from them, stripped them of many things they had too much set their hearts upon, made them wander up and down under the hidings of his face, and groan under sore spiritual troubles, that he might hide pride from their eyes, and induce them to live by faith upon him? In heaven they will reflect upon the benefit they received by these trials and distresses. "Surely," will the soul say, "it was good for me that I was afflicted. Blessed be God for the rod of correction, and that ever he thought me worthy of spending a rod upon me. Blessed be God, that he made me a child of God, and owned me to be such by chastening me, and trained me up for glory in the school of affliction. Amen. Hallelujah."

9. We may conceive another note of their song to be, "Glory, glory, glory to God for his protecting and supporting care of me in the wilderness, and



“safely conducting me through all the snares and temptations of that dreary road.” The people of God hereaway are but as poor wandering sheep, exposed to wild beasts and ravenous wolves, and yet are wonderfully preserved from the paws of the lion and the bear. How often will they say in heaven, “Many times I thought that God would have left me to be destroyed by the devouring beasts of prey, and so quite forsaken me both in my generation and salvation work; but his almighty hand upheld me, he protected me from the rage of all my spiritual enemies, and guided me in all the difficult steps of my pilgrimage-course? Amen. Hallelujah.”

10. We may conceive another note of their song to be, “Glory, glory, glory to God for the victory I have now obtained over sin, Satan, and the world.”

1 Cor. xv. 57. *Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* When the saints are fairly landed in heaven, when they have palms put in their hands in token of victory, have got well-tuned harps for trumpeting forth the praises of their God and Redeemer for ever, do ye not think, that they will cry out, “O victory! O victory! victory over sin, in its guilt, defilement, and power! Victory over Satan and all his emissaries! Now I am got above all the subtil temptations of this hissing serpent, he is bruised under my feet for ever, and I shall never be annoyed by him again for evermore. O sweet victory! Amen. Hallelujah.” What would not some poor tempted believer, that is now harassed by Satan and his temptations, and fears he shall every day fall by the hands of this malicious and potent adversary, give to be in heaven, where he shall be for ever beyond the reach of the crafty snares and fiery darts of the wicked one, and to have this note of praise put in his mouth, “Victory now over all my enemies!” The song in the text is a song on account of the victory over spiritual Antichrist.

It has been observed by some, and is indeed worthy

of observation, that the first time we find the word *Hallelujah* mentioned is Psal. civ. 35. on occasion of consuming the enemies of the Lord: and the last time we find it is Rev. xix. 1. 3. where it is doubled, on account of the downfal of Antichristian Babylon. Thus the word is on both occasions used as a song for the victory the church obtains over her enemies. And in heaven the saints will most chearfully sing, when Satan and all his instruments will be finally overcome, and rise to annoy them no more.

11. The last note I shall mention may be, *Glory, glory, glory to God for the mansions in their heavenly Father's house into which they are admitted, for that glorious state in which they are placed, for the robes of glory wherewith they are clothed, for the crown of glory that they wear, and that consummate happiness to which they are advanced.* Amen. *Hallelujah.*

*Sixtly*, I shall now endeavour to shew the manner of the saints singing in heaven. They will sing the same song that they did upon earth, but in a very different manner. We cannot in the present state well describe the manner of their singing, but we shall offer a few things for illustrating it a little.

1. This blessed company will sing most exactly, with the sweetest harmony. They will every one sing with the most accurate symphony, observing true measure and accent in every note. David, Heman, and Asaph, who were masters of music and sweet singers in Israel, were but as school-boys, learning the first rudiments of music, in comparison of those heavenly singers, who harp upon a sea of glass, and are always at the highest note of their celestial song, who sing with the greatest exactness, without any jarring or discordant note in their seraphic strains.

2. They sing with a loud voice. They cry perpetually, *Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb*, Rev. vii. 10. They will make the temple of God resound with their elevated



voices, the arches of heaven to ring, and every corner of it rebound with their sacred anthem.

3. They will sing with perfect unison, and their song will make a noble concert. In Rev. xix. we find that every one sings their part, and all join in the sweetest chorus.

4. They will sing with the greatest self-denial. In Rev. iv. ult. we find that the four and twenty elders come off the throne, take the crowns from off their heads, and throw them down at the feet of their exalted Sovereign, saying, they deserve not to sit upon thrones in his presence, nor to wear crowns before so august a Monarch. "To thee," say they, "belong all crowns, thrones, and glory." They ascribe all glory and excellency to God, nothing to themselves. They divest themselves as it were of their ornaments of glory, and *ascribe all glory to the Captain of their salvation*, saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power. Amen. Hallelujah.*

5. They sing without interruption and intermission. Here the people of God have their weeping-times, which often interrupt their songs. Like the captive Jews of old, they often sit by the rivers of Babel weeping, and, like them, hang their harps on the willows, by reason of the prevalence of sin, temptation, and difficulties that surround them. But when they come to heaven, all sorrow and sighing shall flee away; and their time shall be spent in one continued song of praise to their God and Redeemer for ever.

6. Lastly, They shall sing without wearying. The saints here cannot always sing, neither have they strength for it; but in heaven neither faintness nor languor shall ever seize them, so as to interrupt their songs. The weakest of them shall be as David, and David as the angel of the Lord in the celestial presence.

III. I come now to the third general head, namely, to shew, whence it comes to pass that the saints will

sing in heaven. Upon this head I shall only mention two or three particulars.

1. The great God himself is the author of all their singing. He puts the song in their mouths, joy in their hearts, and harps in their hands, for warbling forth his praise.

2. The internal moving cause of this singing, is the joy that is put in their hearts by the Spirit of God. Where the heart is elated and swelled with joy, it cannot but vent itself in loud acclamations of singing with the voice.

3. It is because of the blessed state they are advanced unto. They are now exalted above all their enemies, all the fears, snares, trials, and temptations they were exposed to while in this valley of tears. Now they are made to enjoy the blessed vision and fruition of God, without any fear of losing it, or apprehension of having it interrupted. And therefore they cannot but exult and sing with the highest notes of praise.

I shall conclude this subject by deducing a few inferences from the whole.

1. Hence see the happiness of those who are now in heaven, and accounted worthy to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb in the heavenly mansions. Although they had many dark steps in their way thither, many days of weeping and wrestling ere they arrived in those glorious abodes, yet their perfect happiness sufficiently compensates all their griefs, and makes them forget all the toil and trouble they met with by the way.

2. How happy are those who have got the start of us, and are now singing the praises of the Lamb who sits in the midst of the throne? They were perhaps many of them dear to us while here, and we deeply regretted their departure: but they are now triumphing in all the heights of complete felicity, and we ought not to mourn for them in their exalted state.



3. Hence see the vanity, sin, and madness of all carnal mirth and jollity. What is it but like the crackling of thorns under a pot, a sudden blaze that soon evaporates? What avails all the singing and dancing in the world in a carnal manner? It is but a piece of merry madness, which, if not repented of, will leave a bitter sting in the conscience, and issue in everlasting sorrows. View it in the most favourable light, consider it as only an innocent amusement. What is it in such a view compared with the melodious songs of that blessed company, who spend their happy days in singing the song of Moses and the Lamb? songs that never grow stale, nor occasion any satiety.

4. Hence see the misery of all Christless and unconverted persons, who have no cause to sing, but to sigh and sob. Did they know the horrible and dangerous condition they are in, under a sentence of death and condemnation, liable to wrath, and heirs of hell, they would weep and cry night and day, and give no rest to their eyes nor slumber to their eye-lids, until they were brought into a state of favour and friendship with God. It is only they who are in Christ, united to him by faith, that can sing the songs of Zion, even in this strange land; and they only are the happy persons who will be counted worthy to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb in the heavenly Canaan. Therefore, O sinners, flee from the wrath that is to come, unto Jesus Christ, who alone can deliver you from it: Receive and embrace him by faith as your Saviour and Redeemer; and in that way will you be enabled to sing now, and have the high praises of God in your mouths throughout eternal ages.

5. Hence see what cause believers have to sing even in the house of their pilgrimage. Shall it be their delightful employment to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb in the heavenly country, and will they not now anticipate the pleasant work? David could say, *I will sing of mercy and of judgement.* And what believer is there that hath not the same subject to force

his song upon ? The present is their Hallelujah-day, and they should begin the work of heaven on earth. If they were striving through grace to praise him more, they would have more matter of praise every day. O believer, thou art an expectant of glory, a candidate for a glorious and happy immortality, whose work for eternity will be praise; and wilt thou not now tune thy harp to begin the work ? Though thou hast many sad hours, and seasons of weeping pass over thee ; yet thou hast also intermingled therewith seasons of spiritual joy and gladness. Cheer up, O believer, and sing a song to thy Well-beloved in this valley of tears, in hope and confidence that thou wilt sing to better purpose, when thou comest to thy heavenly Father's house.

(1.) Let us praise the Lord for all his mercies toward us, the multitude and variety of them, the free use we have of them, and all the circumstances that attend them. Let the consideration of our utter unworthiness of them, and how we are less than the least of all the distinguishing mercies the Lord hath bestowed on us, powerfully excite us to praise our God and Redeemer.

(2.) Let us ascribe all the glory of our mercies to the Lord. Let us look over instruments, and fix our eyes on the first cause of all grace and mercy, and ascribe the whole glory to the God of all grace. Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights. Let him have all the glory.

(3.) Let us praise the Lord for all his mercies, for the lesser as well as the greater. Every bit of bread and sip of water, is matter of praise, as well as greater mercies, such as Christ, the mercy of mercies, pardon, peace, and all the blessings of the new covenant. Let us learn to own God and the freeness of his grace in all the mercies bestowed upon us.

(4.) In our praises let us condescend upon some particular notes of our song, which will tend to elevate



our hearts, and raise our languid affections. We should be particular in the matter and manner of our praises. Let us go through all our covenant-blessings from the eternity of election to the eternity of glory. Let us bless the Lord our God for electing love, converting grace, pardoning mercy, the sweet gospel-ordinances that we enjoy, especially this solemn memorial of his love that you have been partakers of, for the rod of correction, for any victory that through his grace we have obtained over our corruptions, for the care and pains he has taken upon us to this day, and for all his goodness toward us in our generation and salvation work.

(5.) Lastly, Let us sing unto the Lord with a holy fear and awful impressions of his tremendous Majesty upon our hearts, of the infinite greatness of God, and the vast distance betwixt him the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, and us poor worms sprung of dust. We ought to praise him with much humility of spirit, and to sing with grace in our hearts, making melody unto the Lord, in firm faith and joyful hope that we shall one day sing in the heights of celestial glory. Now unto God and the Lamb be ascribed glory, honour, and praise for evermore. Amen.

## DISCOURSE IX.

To eat of the Tree of Life the Privilege of  
the Spiritual Overcomer \*.

REVELATION ii. 7.

*To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree  
of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*

**S**uch are the glorious excellencies and superlative  
worth and usefulness of our exalted Redeemer,  
that the Holy Ghost in scripture makes use of all  
things that are rare, beautiful, and necessary, to hold  
him forth to poor sinners. And this is done in such  
terms, as they may discern their absolute need of him,  
and what happiness they may attain by being inter-  
ested in him. An eminent instance of this we have in  
the words now read, "To him that overcometh  
will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in  
the midst of the paradise of God."

These words are a part of that epistle which was  
written by John, in name of his blessed Master, to the  
church of Ephesus, one of the seven churches in the  
Lesser Asia: which contain in general a gracious pro-  
mise of the most consummate felicity to every honest  
believer that overcomes in the Christian warfare.

The glorious person who promises is described, ver.  
1. as he who "holdeth the seven stars in his right  
hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven gold-  
en candlesticks;" that is, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who is not only Head and King of these seven church-  
es in particular, but also of the whole church in ge-  
neral.

The person to whom the promise is made is the o-

\* This sermon was preached at St Vigians, July 1723, on Satur-  
day before the sacrament.



overcomer, or the overcoming Christian, who is in good earnest fighting against sin, Satan, and the world, though he has not yet got the victory over these adversaries, but which he will obtain through him that loved him. I am not now to dwell on the nature of the Christian's fight and victory, as I have had occasion to do it in a separate discourse from another text \*.

The privilege or benefit promised to the overcomer, is *to eat of the tree of life*; by which we are to understand the communications of grace here, and everlasting happiness in Christ begun and carried on in the present militant state, and completed hereafter in glory.

The way of obtaining this blessed privilege is by *eating of the tree of life*, by which is meant faith in him, as John vi. 56. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him;" as also a partaking of Christ's gifts and graces. There is a plain allusion here to the tree of life which Adam had access to in his state of primitive integrity. But there is a peculiar excellency in the tree here mentioned, that was not to be found in the other; the one was upon earth, the other is in heaven; the one was long ago destroyed, the other still grows in all its primitive beauty and verdure. Christ is this *tree of life*, who has life in himself, and is the author of spiritual and eternal life to all his followers.

The place where this tree of life stands is said to be *the midst of the paradise of God*, the heavenly Jerusalem, the seat of the blessed. And its being in the midst of this happy abode, denotes the glory and excellency of Christ as the exalted Mediator, in whom as the centre God and men meet in amity, and from whom all divine blessings flow.

The text plainly affords this doctrine,

**Doct. Union and communion with Christ shall be as**

\* The sermon here referred to was on Rev. ii. 17. but cannot now be found. But something of the nature of this fight and victory will be found in the next discourse.

*surely granted to the overcoming believer both here and hereafter: Or, The overcoming believer shall have the privilege allowed him to eat of the tree of life.*

In discoursing from this subject, I shall,

I. Glance at the import of the metaphor, of *eating of the tree of life.*

II. Shew why union and communion with Christ is expressed by *eating of the tree of life.*

III. Mention some of the fruits of this tree.

IV. Shew why this is promised to the overcoming believer.

V. Specify some seasons wherein the believer may expect a taste of those fruits.

VI. Apply.

I. I am to give you the import of the metaphor, of *eating the tree of life.*

1. It is an allusion to the first tree in the terrestrial paradise, which was a seal and sacrament of eternal life to Adam. While he remained in an upright estate, and obeyed the law of his almighty Creator, he was allowed to eat of that tree. But having broke covenant with God, he was debarred from the tree of life, and an angelic guard placed to hinder his access to it; to shew him, that no life or happiness was to be expected from that covenant of works, of which the interdicted tree was a sacrament, but from the seed of the woman, who was in due time to be manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

2. For understanding the import of this metaphor, we are to know, that Christ the second Adam, (1 Cor. xv. 43.), by laying down his life for his people, has recovered and restored all that sinners lost by the transgression of the first Adam. The natural tree of life was a sign and symbol of the happiness man was to enjoy while persisting in a course of obedience to God: but Adam having stopt short in his course, he was driven from that sign and symbol, and so made to see



that no life or happiness was attainable by the broken covenant. The door to life in that manner was barred, and the way of access to heaven by works forever shut. But glory to God, who found out a new and living way, whereby poor sinners of mankind have boldness of access to God. Heb. x. 19. 20. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

3. It imports, that Christ is not only the preacher and purchaser of the believers life, but their life itself, the soul and life of their life, Col. iii. 4. *He is our life.* O that is a sweet word, *our life.* The believer's life is in Christ; he has no life separate from or independent of Christ. Christ lives in the believer, and the believer lives in Christ. He is *the way, the truth, and the life,* John xiv. 6.

4. This is a living, a life-giving, a life-securing tree, of a more durable nature than that which grew in the earthly paradise. This tree is not liable to corruption, Psal. xvi. 10. Christ the true tree of life was pruned in his circumcision, watered in his baptism, cut down in his grave, flourished in his resurrection, and is now springing up in glory. Admire him this day, and let your mouths and hearts be opened wide to receive him in his rich offers and benign influences. "O taste and see that God is good; there is no want to them that fear him." Come and sit down under his shadow with great delight, and you will find his fruit sweet to your souls.

5. The fruit of this tree is always fresh and ripe, both in the summer of prosperity and in the winter of adversity. You will always find it so to your sweet experience, if you come aright to this tree; for its fruit is not liable to decay, or become insipid. This tree bears twelve manner of fruits, great variety, denoting the many blessings he has to bestow; and yields its fruits every month, that is, at all times, for the nourishment and growth of hungry believers; and the

leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations, that is, the promises and ordinances of the covenant of grace are medicine to the souls of men for curing their spiritual maladies, Rev. xxii. 2. The very first tasting of this tree gives life to dead souls, and every posterior taste cherishes and maintains the life of grace in the soul. Much need do ye stand in of this tree at all times, but especially when you are to make such a near approach to God to-morrow at his table. O how sad will it be to see and feel your souls in a dead frame on such a solemn occasion! Cry then and look for a taste of the fruit of this tree, that so you may get light and life.

6. It adds not a little to the glory of this tree, that it is in the midst of the paradise of God. There are no doubt many eyes in heaven, and they are all fixed this day upon Christ the tree of life; and as there are many hands there, they are all grasping at this blessed tree. And this tree is in the midst of the gospel-church, and ye are all called to look at and clasp about him in his word and ordinances. It is by this tree you must climb up to the hill of God; not only to the mount of ordinances, but the high hill of the heavenly Zion. And I think every step the believer takes, he is always pulling fruit off this tree, whereby he is gradually strengthened till he appear before God in Zion.

7. This tree is both for food and shadow: As Christ is *the bread of life*, John vi. 35. so he is *the tree of life*. Under his shadow you must sit down, Cant. ii. 3. if you would wish to be screened and sheltered from the wrath of God; and upon him you must feed, if you would wish to have spiritual nourishment. As he is the Master of the feast you are invited to, so he is the matter of it on which your souls are to feed by faith. Open thy mouth wide then, that he may fill it, and satisfy thy soul with his pleasant fruit. Cry for a gale of the wind of heaven to blow on thy soul, that thou mayst flee to him for shadow, shelter, and refuge, and may get a refreshing meal at his table.



II. I proceed to shew why union and communion with Christ is expressed by eating of the tree of life. This will appear by considering the import of the phrase.

1. It imports, that as our glorious Mediator, by his finishing the work of our redemption, has restored to us all that we lost in Adam; so the believer is put in actual possession of this tree and its fruit, (Cant. ii. 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*); the flaming sword is now removed, and he has his right confirmed by coming to it according to the call of the gospel, and feeding on it by faith.

2. It imports, that no benefit can be had of this tree without application. It is not the seeing, but the eating that will nourish. There must be application of Christ, union and communion with him, if we would have benefit by him. "Go forth then, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, and behold King Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him, in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart," Cant. iii. 11. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price," II. lv. 1.

3. It imports, that this union with or application of Christ is not a superficial thing. It is not a simple taking in the hand, but a fiducial embracing of him, a near incorporation, and inseparable union that cannot be dissolved. We must be implanted and ingrafted in him as lively cyons or branches. See Rom. xi. 24. John xv. 5.

4. It imports, that the sinner, by his eating of this tree, or receiving of Christ, has life given unto him, John vi. 56. *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.* By this his life is maintained, Gal. ii. 20. *I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*

5. It imports, that not only the beginning and car-

tying on of this life depends on this eating; but also that all the believer's comfort and happiness is wrapt up in it. It is of excellent use to refresh, revive, strengthen, and uphold the poor languishing soul in all duties, in all places, and at all times. *As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood* (for beauty and usefulness), *so is my beloved among the sons*, Cant. ii. 3. Many a weary night and day would the poor Christian have otherwise.

6. It holds forth the perpetuity of the life that is implanted in the believer; it is always living, because he is *alive for evermore*, Rev. i. 18. *Because he lives, we shall live also*. This is, as if Christ had said, "As long as I live, (which will be for ever), ye shall live; your life shall never be extinguished, no more than mine can be."

7. It imports, that the full and complete happiness of the believer is reserved till he come to the paradise above; and so some divines restrict the sense of the words to a future state. But we believe, and would fain say we know, in some measure, that believers receive the benefit of that life here, taste the grapes of *Edicol*, and have access to the tree of life, in their present state, by the long armed and eagle-eyed grace of faith. This leads me,

III. To mention some of the rare fruits of this tree of life. If we consider them as they are given, or in that full measure they are let out to the inhabitants of the higher house, we will find them to be all sweet, choice, and glorious. It is impossible to give a full detail of them all, they are so many; yet there are some allowed to the believer here. I shall mention a cluster of them, which you and I very much need, and may get on this occasion.

1. In general, let me observe, that all that is worth the having, is to be had with and from Christ the tree of life, Rom. viii. 32.; grace here and glory hereafter, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Gen. xv. 1.; all the blessings of



this life, and of the world to come: "All things are yours," says the apostle to the believing Corinthians, 1 ep. iii. 21. 22. 23. "whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." We lost our right to all by sin, and Christ came to restore the forfeited right to all things, ordinances, providences, heaven, happiness, and death, as the *nexus* or couple between the two worlds. All things that concern this life natural, Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" All things that concern maintenance, protection, food, raiment, safety, during our pilgrimage here. All things that concern life spiritual, 2 Pet. i. 3. to keep alive grace in the heart, and to express it in the conversation. For the other world we have eternal life, 1 Tim. iv. 1. All thing here have a subserviency to that life, Rom. viii. 28. "All things shall work together for good, to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose." More particularly,

2. In this life there is the pardon of sin, Col. i. 14. 20. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." He made peace through the blood of his cross. Our peace stood Christ dear, that we might enjoy God's peace. See Acts xxvi. 18. "that they might receive forgiveness of sins." Rom. iii. 24. 25. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins." This is sealed in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, Match. xxvi. 28. "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." O how desirable a fruit of redeeming love is this! Psal. xxxii. 1. 2. "Blessed is he whose transgression

"is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." Jer. xxxi. 34. "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." Is not this a sweet fruit to have a full and free remission of all sin and guilt? If. lv. 7.

3. The work of faith in our new birth. "To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, to believe in his name." Christ is the author and finisher of faith. This is such a capital fruit of the tree of life, that without it it is impossible to please God; and lies at the root of all the other fruits.

4. Peace with God, Rom. v. 1. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." God, who was formerly an enemy, is now a friend; the war between us and heaven ceaseth. It is said of the people of Tyre, that they sought peace with Herod, because they could not subsist without him, Acts xii. 20. Certainly it is so here. He hath sent messengers to intimate and publish this peace to the world, Acts x. 36. *preaching peace by Jesus Christ.* God's messengers come to you with an olive-branch of peace in their mouths, proclaiming and offering this peace to all who are willing to enter into it, and cast away the weapons of their rebellion. O how great a mercy is it, to have all grounds of quarrel betwixt God and us removed! If. i. 18. "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." This is our work to-day. O let us betake ourselves to Christ our Goel, our Kinsman-Redeemer, that we may obtain this gracious fruit of peace. He has bought it; it is his purchase. O look to him for it. *This man, the God-man, shall be the peace,* Micah v. 5.

5. Adoption into God's family, John i. 12. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." 1 John iii. 1. "Behold,



“what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” David could say, “Seemeth it a light thing unto you to be son-in-law to a king?” Well may I say, What an high honour is it, to have the blessed God, whom we have so often offended, to become our reconciled Father in Christ?

6. The inheritance of glory. “For if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,” Rom. viii. 18. God’s children shall have a child’s portion: “He hath begotten us again,” says Peter, 1 ep. i. 3. 4. “unto a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” Tit. iii. 7. “Being justified by his grace, we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” All God’s children have a full and rich inheritance kept for them, which is secured to them by the promise of God, and possessed by Christ in their name, and in due time will be bestowed upon them, Rom. vi. 8. Who among the sons of men can boast of such an inheritance? Let us labour with indefatigable care, that we may attain this inheritance.

7. The Holy Ghost, who is given not only to sanctify us at first, but to dwell in our hearts, as a constant inhabitant, as in his own temple, 1 Cor. vi. 19.; to maintain God’s interest in our souls; to conquer the devil, subdue fleshly corruptions, and overcome the world; for we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The Spirit succoureth us in all our distresses, and helpeth our infirmities. By this Spirit we are cleansed more and more from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit, sanctified throughout, and fitted gradually for the enjoyment of that eternal inheritance we are appointed unto.

8. Peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. This is one of the great privileges of Christ’s kingdom, far excelling all the privileges an earthly monarch can bestow on his subjects. It is the province of the Spirit to bestow this signal blessing. For “the love of God

“is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us,” Rom. v. 5. He assures us that we are his children, Rom. viii. 16. by the concurrent testimony of our own spirit. And this is the earnest and fore-pledge of our everlasting happiness, 2 Cor. v. 5.

9. Sanctification. By nature we are black and ugly, a mass of deformity and impurity: but through his comeliness we are made beautiful and holy. Christ is made unto us *sanctification*, 1 Cor. i. 30. *I am black, but comely*, says the spouse, Cant. i. 5. *The King's daughter is all glorious within*, Psal. xlv. 13.

10. Grace, and more grace, is the fruit of the tree of life. That is a remarkable and sweet passage, John i. 14. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us—full of grace and truth.” And it is added, ver. 16. “And of his fulness have all we received and grace for grace.” Come to this tree of life, and you will get all the grace you stand in need of.

11. What shall I say more? Time would fail me to tell you of all the fruits of the tree of life. I shall only add, There is access to God, with full assurance of welcome and audience, Psal. l. 15. “Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” Heb. iv. 15. 16. “We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. 1 John v. 14. “This is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.” O what a blessed privilege is it, that we have a Father to go to, and that our persons and services should be acceptable and pleasing to him for Christ's sake! Eph. ii. 19. & iii. 12. We have the comfort of this, living and dying.

These are some of the fruits that grow on the tree,



of life, for who can number them all? they are better felt than expressed.

Should it be asked, what are those fruits we shall receive when we come to glory? I answer, that all the fruits we get here shall then be arrived at full maturity and perfection. See 1 Cor. xiii 9.—12. Here the new creature has spots, but then it will be presented spotless by this tree of life. Again, What believers now see by faith, they shall then have in immediate vision, and the hope of glory shall be absorbed in fruition. Let us then be calling the anchor of hope within the vail, whither Christ our forerunner has for us entered, Heb. vi. 17. 18.

IV. I come now to shew why this blessed privilege of eating of the tree of life is allowed to the overcomer in the spiritual warfare.

1. We are not to understand this so, as that the believer can overcome in his own strength, and then get this as a reward. No; all is the effect of free grace, Eph. ii. 8. "By grace are ye saved," says the apostle, "through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." John xv. 5. "Without me ye can do nothing."

2. We are not to understand it, as if their overcoming were meritorious to obtain this tree, and its precious fruits: for believers have nothing but what they receive. "What hast thou, O man, which thou hast not received?"

3. This is the stated order, whereby believers are to come to the participation of this privilege. They must so run as to obtain, and so fight as to get the crown, 2 Tim. iv. 7. Heb. x. 35. 36. As their glorious Head was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and had many enemies to fight and overcome, before he entered to the possession of the throne, as the reward of his sufferings; so all his members must encounter many adversaries and difficulties, ere they come to the heavenly kingdom.

V. I come now to name some of those seasons where-  
in the overcoming believer may expect a taste of those  
blessed fruits.

1. In general, I say, that from the first moment a  
sinner has in good earnest come over to God's side,  
and is fairly lifted under Christ's banner, and inrolled  
among his people, he gets some tastes of these fruits,  
and eats some of the grapes of Etheol. More particu-  
larly,

2. In the morning of conversion. An illustrious  
instance of this you have in the case of Saul, Acts ix.  
6.—18. So 2 Pet i. 9. 10. Thus the prodigal when  
he came to himself, (for he was beside himself, or out  
of his right wits before), and was thinking of return-  
ing to his father, his father fell on his neck and kissed  
him, Luke xv. 20.—24. It is mostly to be remarked  
in the conversion of young persons. We find Job cries  
out, chap. xxix. 2. 3. 4. "Oh that I were as in  
" months past, as in the days when God preserved me:  
" when his candle shined upon my head, and when  
" by his light I walked through darkness: as I was  
" in the days of my youth, when the secret of God  
" was upon my tabernacle." When the pouring out  
of the Spirit is promised, we are told that young per-  
sons share much in it, Joel ii. 28. compared with Is.  
xliv. 3. 4. I will tell you, O ye young persons, that  
it is your great advantage to begin with God betimes,  
and come early to Christ, for he will never forget the  
love of your youth, Jer. ii. 2.

3. When he is calling his people to some great work.  
When Moses was called to bring the children of Israel  
out of Egypt, he got remarkable strength and furni-  
ture from the Lord, and glorious views of him, Exod.  
iv. 10. 11. 12. Thus Joshua, when he had the dif-  
ficult work put into his hand of introducing the Is-  
raelites into the land of Canaan, had a manifestation  
of Christ as the Captain of the Lord's host, Josh. v.  
13. 14. 15. And thus also the prophet Isaiah, when



sent on an embassy to the Jews, had a glorious manifestation of the Lord Jesus, chap. vi.

4. Before some great trial, as in the case of the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7.

5. When they have been wrestling with God, as in the case of Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 24. &c.

6. When they are diligently attending on the ordinances, as in the case of the spouse, Cant. iii. 4. & v. 4. and in that of David, Psal. lxi. 5. "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." Particularly it is so in the ordinance of the Lord's supper. It is with his people then as with the disciples going to Emmaus, to whom Christ joined himself, and of whom he was known in the breaking of bread, Luke xxiv. 29. And it is added, ver. 32. "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and opened to us the scriptures?"

7. When they are on the brink of death and the grave. Thus it was with Stephen, Acts vii. 55. who, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And thus it is with every overcoming believer. The devil knows that the man is now casting his last throw for eternity; and if he miss him now, he has lost him for ever: therefore he musters all his fiery darts, and raises all his batteries against the poor soul. But the Captain of the Lord's host, even Christ the Captain of salvation, comes in with his new supplies of grace, and fills the soul with his comforting, reviving, and strengthening fruit, so that he is *made strong in the Lord*, Eph. vi. 10. and is enabled to sing that swan-like song, 1 Cor. xv. 55. 56. 57. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

I shall shut up this discourse with some practical improvement, which shall be discussed in some inferences, and an use of exhortation.

INF. 1. Is it so that to the overcoming believer it shall be given to eat of the tree of life? Then we may see what great encouragement the believer has to go through all the difficulties he meets with in his way: "After I have suffered a while," (may he say), "I shall get the tree of life to feed upon." Heb. x. 35. — 37. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Wherefore I give you that advice, 1 Cor. xv. ult. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

2. We may hence learn, whence it is that there is so little of the Spirit and grace of union and communion with Christ. Alas! it is because there are few fighters and few overcoming combatants. Many pretend to be engaged in the spiritual warfare, but their conduct evidently belies their professions.

(1.) How many are grossly ignorant, and know nothing of this tree of life, and of the fruits that grow thereupon? If Christ at this day should ask many that question, Luke ix. 20. *Whom say ye that I am?* Alas! they could not tell. There are many like to die in their ignorance, not knowing the very first principles and rudiments of religion. O will you bewail this unaccountable ignorance to-day, and look to heaven for that anointing promised, that you may be all taught of God.

(2.) There are many Atheists, who are laughing at all things sacred and serious, lying sleeping in the devil's arms, and will not be awakened. O that such (if any



of them are here) would be prevailed with to awake out of their spiritual lethargy. I cry to you (in my Master's name) once more, and give you warning in the apostle's words, Eph. v. 14. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

(3.) Many are following their pernicious ways, fleeing from this tree of life. They will not come near his ordinances: they foolishly think they stand in no need of these things; while in the mean time they are *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*, Rev. iii. 17.

3. Hence see the danger of turning the back on the glorious Captain of salvation. Whenever the Christian deserts Christ, alas! then he leaves off fighting; and, instead of overcoming, he is in danger to be overcome. O then cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart.

The next use shall be of exhortation. O my dear friends, be persuaded to come and sit down under Christ's shadow, and eat his pleasant fruit.

To enforce this exhortation, and that I may prevail with you to comply therewith, and I earnestly wish the Lord himself may prevail with you, I will lay before you a few pathetic considerations by way of motive, and so conclude.

1. The first motive shall be taken from the excellency of this tree and its fruit.

(1.) This fruit is spiritual, suited to the nature of an immortal soul. How foolish is the worldling that fills his barns, and starves his soul? "Wherefore then do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Harken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness," Is. lv. 2.

(2.) It is fruit that gives life. A sinner no sooner tastes of this fruit, but he becomes a living soul. All the dainties of the world may support natural life, but

they cannot give life to a dead person. *I give unto them eternal life*, says Christ this tree of life, *and they shall never perish*, never die, John x. 28.

(3.) It is durable and lasting fruit. All other fruit soon rots and perishes. But this fruit endureth for ever. It is the staff of the believer's life, which he must still keep in his hand. When this earth, and all the fruits and provisions that are in it, shall be burnt up at the last day, this fruit will remain the same: and may I not say, that the longer it lasts, it is the sweeter and more relishing? They who have been feeding on it for thousands of years, are not cloyed with its sweetness; it occasions no satiety or loathing: nay they find it sweeter and sweeter.

(4.) It is rare fruit. There is but one tree of life, that yields its fruits for poor sinners. *I am the way, the truth, and the life*, says Christ, the one way to heaven and happiness; there is no life but in me, John xiv. 6. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12.

(5.) Whoso tastes of this tree, gets the whole fruits of it. Faith is but one grace; but he that hath it has all the rest of the golden chain, love, hope, repentance, &c.

(6.) This tree is excellent for the variety of its fruits. It is but one tree, yet it has many fruits, Rev. xxii. 2. It bears twelve manners of fruits; which number points out its variety, *all manner of fruits*, for all months and seasons.

Allow me then to expostulate with you a little. What ails you at Christ? Is he not worth the seeking, loving, and admiring? Is not this tree worthy of your highest esteem and most endeared regard?

Art thou in darkness, and hast no light? Arise, and taste of this fruit, and thou shalt get spiritual light, Eph. v. 14. Jonathan tasted but a little honey, and his eyes were enlightened, 1 Sam. xiv. 27. O then come and taste of this fruit, and the scales of spiritual dark-



ness shall fall from thine eyes, and thou shalt be made light in the Lord. Art thou poor? Here is enriching food and fruit. It is gold tried in the fire, that enriches the soul. Art thou sick of the disease of sin? Then here is healing fruit. The leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations. It is the balm of Gilead for curing thy deadly disease. Art thou poisoned by drinking the deadly draught of sin, and is thy belly swelled, and thy thigh rotting with it? Come, here is a healing medicine for thee, to expel the poison. Art thou a condemned malefactor, under a sentence of death? Come to this tree, for it will procure thy pardon. There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Eat of the tree of life, and thou shalt be delivered from the curse of the law, and invested with the righteousness of Christ.

2. Consider the miserable condition you will be in without Christ. Instead of eating the fruit of the tree of life, you will get the apples of Sodom to eat, and the wine of Gomorrah to drink, nay the wine of the wrath of God. If ye come not to this tree of life, and eat his pleasant fruits, you will be excluded from heaven for ever.

3. Consider what a fair opportunity ye have to feast upon this tree, both in the word and in the sacrament. This tree is exhibited unto you in this gospel, so as you may behold it by the eye of faith, and eat it, and live for ever. Come then, and taste of this fruit, and feast your souls unto eternal life. And if you have tasted of this fruit by faith in the word, come and feast upon it to-morrow in the sacrament, where it will be represented to you in all its beauty and verdure. O be honest and sincere in your approaches to the Lord in that solemnity.

4. Consider what a melancholy reflection it will be to you, to look back upon all the calls and offers ye have got, if ye neglect this great salvation. I assure you, ye will get of this fruit, and taste of this tree of life, upon your very first coming to it, upon your first

setting your face in good earnest against sin, Satan, and the world. The eating of the forbidden fruit killed Adam and Eve; and brought death into the world: and the eating of this tree of life will remove the death of the soul, and make it alive to God. O Sirs, come unto this life-giving tree, that ye may have life, and avoid the second death. Be not discouraged, but come boldly. It is true Satan will oppose you in this good work, as he did Joshua the high priest, Zech. iii. 1. As he did to him, so will he do to you; he stood at his right hand to resist him, at his working hand to withstand him. Cry as he did, ver. 3. "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee." Resist him, steadfast in the faith, 1 Pet. v. 9. His chief engine is unbelief, which he manages successfully for the ruin of many. O then get faith; and cry with the disciples, *Lord, increase our faith.* I close with that word, Psal. lxxxi. 10. "I am the Lord thy God; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."



## DISCOURSE X.

The rich Inheritance of the spiritual Overcomer.\*

REVELATION xxi. 7.

*He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

**T**HE state of believers in this world is a combating and militant condition, wherein they are called to fight under Christ's love-banner against all his and their enemies. Many of you have been lifting yourselves as his soldiers; and I am come to encourage you in this warfare, by giving you full assurance of a blessed reward in the end, if you be faithful.

In the preceding chapter we have a prophetic account of the last and general judgement, and the issue thereof with respect to the wicked; and in this chapter, of its issue with regard to good men, they shall go to heaven. This is set forth by a vision represented to John, and by a voice confirming it. There are three several speeches ascribed to Christ. (1.) He proclaims himself to be the author of the new creation, "And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new," ver. 5. (2.) He commands John to write, ver. 5. *Write: for these words are true and faithful.* (3.) He declares the accomplishment of whatsoever was promised, concerning the happy estate of his people. This he confirms, [1.] By a description of himself, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.* [2.] By a twofold promise of the happiness of heaven; the first in the verse preceding my text, "I

\* This sermon was preached on a thanksgiving-day after the Sacrament at Inverkillor.

" will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain  
 " of the water of life freely ; and the second in my  
 text, *He that overcometh shall inherit all things, &c.* In  
 these words we have,

1. A description of the person to whom the promise  
 is made: *He that overcometh* ; he that is a conqueror of  
 sin and Satan, and gets the mastery over those formi-  
 dable enemies. And this is expressed in the singular  
 number, to shew that Christ takes notice not only of a  
 church or people that overcome, but even of every in-  
 dividual unbeliever ;—in the present time, *He that over-*  
*cometh*, or, as it is in the original, *He that is overcoming*,  
 to shew that the believer gets not the complete victory  
 here ; yet he is getting some advantages against his e-  
 nemies daily by degrees, is in a course of victory,  
 and at last shall be fully victorious :—indefinitely, *He*  
*that overcometh* : Whoever he be, whatever circum-  
 stances he is in, though he be mean, low, and despi-  
 cable in the world, yet if he overcome, he shall inher-  
 it the promises made to believers in Christ.

2. The happy state and privilege which the spiritual  
 overcomer shall be possessed of, and admitted to ; which  
 is set forth by different expressions, to shew the sur-  
 passing richness thereof.

(1.) *He shall inherit all things.* He shall be made  
 partaker of all the joy and happiness of heaven, cal-  
 led *all things*, because nothing is wanting there to  
 complete their everlasting felicity ; they shall be pos-  
 sessed of all those things that can make them perfectly  
 blessed. The way this is expressed deserves notice,  
*He shall inherit all things* ; that is, he shall enter into  
 the actual possession of the kingdom prepared for him  
 from the foundation of the world, Matth. xxv. 34.  
 Thus we find heaven called *the inheritance of the saints*  
*in light* ; not that it is the fruit of merit, but freely  
 given through the grace of God.

(2.) *I will be his God, and he shall be my son* : not as  
 if he then began to be their God, and they his sons,  
 or by adoption all believers have that ; but I will be



his God and Father, and he shall be my son in a more immediate and intimate way: I will make it known in another manner to him that I am his God. This confirms what he said before: for believers, having God for their God, have all; he shall be all in all to them, 1 Cor. iii. 31. 22. 23. *He shall be my son; I will manifest him to be so; for he shall receive the privilege and advantage of a son, even the purchased possession.*

The text plainly affords this doctrine, viz.

Doctr. *Every overcomer in the spiritual warfare shall be rewarded with heavenly happiness.*

In prosecuting this doctrine, I shall,

- I. Shew who are those that overcome.
- II. What that happiness is they shall be made partakers of.
- III. Give the reasons of the doctrine.
- IV. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to shew whom we understand by the overcomer. The following things are implied in this overcoming.

1. That they have a good cause to contend and wrestle for; God's glory, the kingdom of Christ, his truths and interest in the world, and their own salvation: they *fight the good fight of faith*. A noble cause indeed!

2. That they have enemies to fight against. These are three. Satan who is a powerful, subtle, malicious, and restless enemy;—the world, and the wicked therein: the former is their enemy for the sake of their profession, and the latter on account of their holiness:—the flesh and universal corruption, the worst and most dangerous enemy of all; for though there were no other enemy, yet this were enough to keep us fighting all our life-time.

3. An actual fighting and wrestling with these ene-

mies, 2 Tim. ii. 3. "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Christianity is the work of a noble and magnanimous spirit, and requires an undaunted courage and resolution, which is the fruit of the Spirit.

4. Victory. They have not indeed yet got the full victory; but they are overcomers in part, they are struggling with their enemies, obtaining gradual successes. Every partial victory is an evidence and assurance that they shall be conquerors at length. They are called overcomers here, and in chap. ii. & iii. to shew that they are in the way to victory; and at last they shall obtain a full conquest under the Captain of their salvation, have a garland of glory put upon their heads, palms of victory put in their hands, and golden harps given them to trumpet forth the praises of their Captain-General.

But, you may say, we know that all believers shall at last be conquerors; be pleased to shew who is he that overcomes now. I shall endeavour to give you the character of the overcomer in the following particulars.

1. He is one that has given up himself to Christ and his service: he has lifted himself under his banner, and accordingly fights under his standard. He gets armour from his glorious Captain. Unless we be in Christ, we have no strength for combating our spiritual adversaries. Without him we can do nothing; we cannot fall out against our enemies. The believer's head is his strength.

2. He is one that, by the aid of divine grace, has frustrated and broken the grand design of his spiritual enemies, which was to keep him still in their clutches, a bond-slave to Satan, and the drudge of sin. But he has escaped from prison, he is a captive let loose, a prisoner set at liberty, a fire-brand pulled out of the fire.

3. He is one that continually wrestles and contends for final victory. It is not every one who fights, that



overcomes, but he that sincerely and constantly wages war with his inveterate foes. It is he who is valiant for the truth, who sends for and fetches down help from on high, that brings in heaven's auxiliaries, and can never be at rest till he get a complete victory, and his enemy's forces be routed.

4. He is one that daily makes some advances in the victory. It is true indeed, though he may gain ground, yet he is not free from all assaults, the devil being a restless enemy, whether conqueror or conquered. The believer is therefore one that never gives his enemies rest, but is still fighting, and pressing towards victory. He gains some advantages against them in the following respects.

(1.) He weakens the force of his enemies. He is dead to sin, crucified to the world; and in so far as he is, so far he gains ground.

(2.) He keeps his ground, and will not yield to enemies. Although believers may be so far overtaken as to yield to sin, yet generally their common course and care is to adhere to Christ resolutely. They are made alive to him by the Spirit, they live by faith, and are careful to maintain good works, which are good and profitable unto men.

(3.) His graces are increased. He goes on from strength to strength: and in so far as grace prevails, so much is corruption weakened. Though believers may be sadly assaulted by Satan, yet they get sensible advantage against him. Rev. xii. 11. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." They get advantage against the world by being crucified to it, by patience under troubles, and resolutions to keep close by their Captain, in spite of its feud or favour. They get advantage over the flesh, by mortifying and crucifying thereof, with the affections and lusts, Gal. v. 24. They put their enemies to flight by a stedfast resistance, 1 Pet. v. 9.

5. He divides the spoil; and what Satan and the world design for his ruin, signally tends to his victory.

Temptations make believers more cautious and watchful. By tribulation, affliction and persecution their dross is only consumed, and they are the more refined by them, more alienated from the love of the world, and more anxious after Christ and heaven. *In all these things they are more than conquerors through him that loved them, Rom. viii. 37.*

II. I come now to glance at the happiness that is reserved for and promised to overcomers. I shall restrict myself to the expressions made use of in the text.

*First, They shall inherit all things; i. e.* They shall be put in the possession of all happiness. How is this called *all things*? This is accounted for in the following words, *I will be his God, and he shall be my son, God is their all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28.* God is an all-sufficient God, an inexhaustible treasure of all grace and goodness. The saints enjoy all things in him, *2 Cor. vi. 10. As having nothing, and yet possessing all things. ver. 18.* “I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty.” There is enough in him eternally to satisfy the desires of his people. More particularly,

1. The overcomer shall inherit all things equivalently; that is, what is as good as all things; what makes up the want of all things, of honours, riches, and every desirable thing. The happiness the saints shall possess, is infinitely better than all the delights and pleasures, and honour that can be enjoyed here below.

2. He shall inherit all things virtually. Whatever joy, satisfaction, and comfort can be had here below, is all in heaven, and much more. There is nothing wanting there that is necessary to constitute complete happiness.

3. He shall inherit all things eminently. Whatever is necessary for conveniency or delight, is to be had in heaven: therefore it is held out in scripture by the plenitude of all good things, Heb. x. 34. “Ye had



"compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully  
 "the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves  
 "that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring sub-  
 "stance." All things in this world are but shadows;  
 heaven is the substance.

As to the manner of holding the possession; it is by inheritance, He *shall inherit*: 1 Pet. iii. 9. "Know-  
 "ing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should in-  
 "herit a blessing." It is so expressed in the text, to intimate,

1. That it is a free holding; an inheritance that is not purchased, but freely given. So Rom. vi. ult. *the gift of God* is said to be *eternal life*; and it is so because they are heirs of this glory. This is not thro' any merit of theirs, as we said, but by his free grace; Tit. iii. 5. "Not by works of righteousness which we  
 "have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."

2. A full holding. It is more than a simple legacy. Heirs are maintained out of the inheritance while young; and when they come to majority, they receive the inheritance. So the saints have something in hand, like young heirs; but when they come to heaven, they get the whole in hand, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

3. An honourable holding and possession, more honourable than any holding of land here, yea than that of a kingdom. By serving God and embracing Christ, they become children; and "if children,  
 "then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with  
 "Christ," Rom. viii. 17. A dignified privilege indeed!

4. A sure holding. A servant may be turned out of doors, but a son is not so. So the saints have a sure title to heaven: none can take the kingdom from them. Heaven is made over to them by Christ's testament; and it shall be made good, since he ever lives to be executor of his own testament.

But, say some, if one inherits all things, what comes of the rest? I answer, Every one inherits all things, be-

cause it is the nature of the kingdom, that it cannot be divided. It is infinite, and therefore sufficient to answer all the desires of all the elect, every one having all satisfaction, a full plerophory of bliss, as much as a finite vessel can hold.

Secondly, The second expression is, *I will be his God*; I will be continually his, fully his, and eternally his God. What can afford greater delight and comfort than this? It is the top of all happiness, Psal. cxliv. ult. *Happy is that people whose God is the Lord.* All the promises are summed up in this: it will take eternity to make a full commentary on it, and its import is unutterable.

But, one may say, is not God their God here? I answer, he is; but in heaven he will make it out to them in another manner. It may import the following particulars.

1. *I will be his God*; that is, I will continue to be so. I am so now, and will be so for ever, Psal. xlviii. ult. *This God is our God for ever and ever.*

2. *I will be his God*; that is, In heaven I will make it manifest to him that I am his God. Believers are often here in the dark, so that they cannot distinctly tell whether God be their God or not. But when they come to heaven, all these clouds will flee away. When that blissful day dawns, all fogs and mists will be for ever dispelled. When the Sun of righteousness shines in his meridian splendor, there shall be no more darkness: the sun shall then arise that shall never set. They have there no sinful infirmity to hide his face from them.

3. *I will be his God*; that is, I will make out myself as such to his inexpressible comfort. When the believer comes to heaven, he shall be filled with all the fulness of God, which is an overflowing and ever-flowing fulness, that can never be drained.

The third expression is, *He shall be my son.* What an excellent privilege is this! How glorious is the condition of every overcomer! He is one of the seed-



royal of heaven. How astonishing is it, that those who are by nature the children of wrath, are called to inherit a blessing, and that the children of the devil should be called the sons of God! O wonderful! The apostle is filled with admiration at it, 1 John iii. 1. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" that rebels against heaven should not only be pardoned, but made friends; and not only so, but sons also! All the splendid titles of the world are not so excellent; they will end, but this never shall. It is true, believers are the sons of God here; for he takes them into sonship by adoption: but this is in relation to heaven, and it may import,

1. *He shall be my son*; that is, He shall continue in that relation for ever: it is a permanent relation, once a son, and always so, John viii. 35. "The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth for ever." God will never disinherit his sons; they shall dwell for ever in his house,

2. *He shall be my son*; that is, I will make it conspicuous and manifest that he is my son, Rom. viii. 19. "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." It shall then be made manifest,

(1.) To themselves. There may now be many intervening clouds that may hinder them for a time to see their sonship; but then all clouds, doubts, and fears shall vanish away.

(2.) To one another. Believers here may be ignorant that such persons are the sons of God, seeing that every where hypocrites put on the vizard of religion; but then they shall be made manifest to one another, that they are children of the same Father.

(3.) To the wicked. Believers here are princes in disguise and under a vail; but then God will openly own them before heaven and earth as his sons.

3. *He shall be my son*; that is, he shall fully reap the privileges and advantages of being my son. The

heir, while he is young, differs not much from a servant, though he be lord of all, Gal. iv. 1. It is but little believers enjoy now; they have only some earnest of the inheritance, Gal. iv. 6.: but when in heaven they get the full possession, then, and not till then, is their adoption complete; and therefore we find heaven so called, Rom. viii. 23. *waiting for the adoption, viz. the redemption of our body.* Their adoption shall then be perfect; it will be manifest, Col. iii. 4. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

III. I come to shew why it is that God will bestow so great happiness on those that overcome.

Indeed there is no merit here: for we can merit nothing at God's hand: all our merits are nothing but evil. Neither can we lay any obligation on God to bestow glory on us, Rom. xi. 35. 36. "Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things." There is no obligation laid on him then on our part; but God hath been pleased to lay an obligation on himself. I shall give you the following reasons from the text. He does so,

1. Because he is engaged by covenant and promise. Now a promise obliges a man to performance. Hence believers are called *heirs according to the promise*, Gal. iii. ult. *He shall inherit all things.*

2. He is engaged (so to speak) to bestow so great happiness on them, by becoming their God, Heb. xi. 16. "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God." If he had not better things to bestow upon his people than this world, he would be ashamed to be called their God; but he has a better country prepared for them.

3. By conferring upon them the dignity of being his sons, Rom. viii. 15. 17. God hath appointed Christ, his Son, *heir of all things*, Heb. i. 2.; and believers are



the joint-heirs with him ; they are the adopted sons. Now all that are such are adopted to some inheritance. Believers are adopted unto this inheritance ; and indeed, as I said, till they come to be possessed of this, their adoption is never complete.

I proceed now to the application of this subject.

Is it so that there is so great happiness promised to the spiritual overcomer ? then improve this doctrine as an encouragement to try and strive that ye may be among the number of these overcomers. Here I would exhort you to mind the following things.

1. Look well that ye be fairly engaged in the Christian warfare. See that ye have listed yourselves to be Christ's soldiers. We are sent here to take on soldiers for the Captain-General of the Lord's hosts. There is a war denounced betwixt Christ and Satan and his accomplices. We come to try who will enlist with this Captain. We invite you to take up arms under him, and we promise you a sure and great reward, a thousand fold in this life, and in the world to come eternal life. But alas ! how few are there that will give up their names to Christ ? If ye will not, we assure you, the devil will be your ruin. Whereas, if you will consent to be Christ's, and be faithful to him, your enemies shall now in part be overcome, and at last ye shall get the full victory. And therefore ye are to fight against your most dearly beloved lusts, and the sins that most easily beset you, and give up yourselves to the direction and protection of Christ as your Leader and Commander : and he will conduct you to glory at last. You need not fear that he will engage you in the battle, and then leave you ; for as he brings you on to the battle, so he will fairly bring you off.

2. Fight under his banner as good soldiers ; and endeavour to manage yourselves under his conduct so as ye may be overcomers. For, as this is your militant state, you must expect fightings without, and

fears within. In this world you shall have tribulation. Therefore you must,

(1.) Fight earnestly, vigorously contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. Indifferency does not become a good soldier of Jesus Christ. As Alexander the Great said to one of his soldiers, "Either deny your name, or else fight valiantly;" so say I to you, Either renounce the Christian name, or fight with earnestness and activity in this spiritual combat; for the cause is noble, and the success sure.

(2.) Fight valiantly. Quit yourselves like men, and be strong in the Lord, and in the grace that is in Christ. The prophet complains of the Jews, Jer. ix. 3. *that they were not valiant for the truth upon the earth.* Shew a holy valour and bravery, in putting a knife to the throat of all your lusts. Entertain such a holy courage and intrepidity, that in nothing ye may be terrified by your adversaries.

(3.) Fight resolutely. Stand out through grace against difficulties; with purpose of heart stand and keep your ground. To prevent indifference of spirit, it is necessary you be resolved and determined; carefully guarding against halting between two opinions, between Christ and Belial.

(4.) Fight constantly: Rev. ii. 10. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* It is constancy that crowns the Christian. The promise is made to the overcomer in the text, and elsewhere in scripture. See then that you continue stedfast in the faith. Take heed that you lose not those things which ye have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward, 2 John 8. O you that have taken Christ's pence-money (so to speak), will you betray his cause? I fairly warn you, that you will with meet assaults from Satan and his instruments; and therefore ye have much need to be frequent in prayer, and to remember that watchword which Christ gave to Peter, *Simon, Satan hath sought to winnow thee as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.* We have need to put up that



prayer of the disciples frequently; *Lord, increase our faith.* And if you do so, he will not be wanting to you; but he will take notice of you, as he did of Simon. He observes every spiritual combatant, that is aiming at victory, and will strengthen their faith and courage. For motives, consider,

1. Your warfare will not continue always. The battle will not last long. Death will accomplish and put an end to your spiritual campaigns.

2. The final victory is certain, if you be faithful, and persevere steadily in your course. *Sin shall not have dominion over you, or lord it over you,* as it is in the original, Rom. vi. 14. Your great Captain will shortly bruise Satan under your feet. As Christ your head overcame, so ye that are his members shall also overcome.

3. Your reward will be sure also, and it will be glorious beyond all conception or expression. You may lose all here, but your losses will be amply compensated in heaven by an exceeding great recompense of reward. Among men, when the war is ended, the soldiers are often discharged, and receive no more pay; but here the matter is quite otherwise: for the spiritual overcoming soldier then reaps the full reward of all the campaigns he has served in, in being admitted to sit with his General on his throne.

But some may say, "Surely a very great reward is prepared for all that overcome in this spiritual warfare; we would fain be among the happy number: but how shall we manage ourselves so as to overcome?" I answer,

1. Get your armour in readiness, Eph. vi. 13. "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand." And see that ye keep every particular piece clear and ready for use.

2. Lay aside all impediments that may be troublesome to you, or tend to entangle you; every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset you. It is a

pity, says one, that the battle should be lost for bag and baggage.

3. Watch continually. The devil and your corruptions are never idle, but restless. Therefore set a watch on all the faculties of your souls, and members of your bodies, in case of an attack. Be continually on your watch-tower, to prevent a surprise, and the enemy's stealing a march upon you.

4. Go forth in the name and in the strength of your Lord and Captain against all your enemies. Christ is the General under whose command and direction you are to fight. His cross is your colours, which you are never to leave nor desert. Call for the assistance of your Leader in every rencounter, without once daring to fight in your own strength: for if you do, you will soon be foiled. Resolve and say with David, Psal. lxxi. 16. "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness; even of thine only." Exercise a constant dependence upon the Lord for skill, for courage, and for success in every battle; and if ye do so, ye shall overcome.

5. Be frequent in partaking of the Lord's supper. It is a soul-strengthening ordinance, and a noble preparative for the spiritual journey and battle. We come to it to have our strength for work and warfare recruited, and to have needful supplies of food and furniture in the inner man.

6. *Lastly*, Be much exercised in the duty of prayer, Eph. vi. 18. After the apostle in that context had exhorted Christians to put on the whole armour of God, and specified the several pieces of it, he subjoins, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Some observe, that this 18th verse is to be connected with every particular direction given before, thus: "Therefore take unto you the whole armour of God, praying always: Take the shield of faith, praying always," &c. Prayer is as it were the lace that buckles on the armour.



When Paul was assaulted by Satan's temptations, he addressed the throne of grace by prayer, and got this comfortable answer, *My grace is sufficient for thee*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. Prayer is a successful weapon. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. iv. 16.

*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.*

## DISCOURSE XI.

### The Joy resulting from Faith \*.

LUKE xix. 6.

*And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.*

**A**LL scripture," says the apostle Paul, 2 Tim. iii. 16. "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." We have a very instructive and useful passage of holy writ to this purpose, Is. lv. 10. 11. 12. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and turneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Of this we have a remarkable instance in the text, *And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.* Wherein you have,

1. The sweet companion of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, viz. joy; *He received him joyfully.*
2. The person thus exulting and rejoicing; namely, Zaccheus. You have the character of this man set before you in the text and context, in three remarkable periods of his life. (1.) Before, (2.) At, And, (3.) After his conversion.

\* This sermon was preached at Brechin, on a week-day, in 1735.



Before his conversion you have him characterized, (1.) From his office in which he was employed. (2.) From the affluence and abundance he had of the things of time. As to his office, he was a publican; and seeing there were several orders of them, as superior and inferior, he was one of the chief; and so cannot be looked upon in this capacity as one of the poorest or the best of men. As to his circumstances, he was rich: and this was no wonder; for such men in those times were great extortioners and oppressors of the poor.

Again, He is described from his curiosity and concern to see Christ the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. The occasion of it was this. Having observed a great crowding of people, and asking the reason thereof, he was told, that it was Jesus of Nazareth passing by. On this blessed news, being little of stature, he climbed up into a sycamore-tree, that he might look over the heads of the multitude, to see the divine Jesus. Never was such a lovely person seen on earth: no wonder then though this man ran and climbed up into a tree to get a sight of him.

We have Zaccheus further described from Christ's observation of him, ver. 5. "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." It was impossible, that Christ could miss observing him, or any person who is influenced by grace to come and run to him as a Saviour. So that here you may observe the blessed mean of this poor man's conversion: Christ looked up and saw him, and said unto him, "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Zaccheus looked to see Christ, and Christ gives him a look of mercy. Christ's looks are loving, life-giving, and healing looks. O, it is good to be in Christ's way, and to be near to and in the place where he is, and where his honour dwells. O will you that have seen the lovely Jesus, on whom he has looked

and yet looks graciously, will you, I say, admire the riches, the freeness, and the fulness of divine grace, that seeks not a worthy object, but makes the object worthy. What a powerful sweet word was that, "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down! &c." This was Christ's call to him.

In the text we have the man's obedience to the call. Though curiosity led him up to the tree, yet love to Christ brought him down from his heights to the Saviour. He directly came down from the tree, and received Christ with all the transports of joy. His character after his conversion you will see described in the following context.

From the last clause of the text I observe the following doctrine, *viz.*

*DOCT. That very often the first act of faith in conversion is accompanied with joy. He received him joyfully.*

I shall endeavour, through divine assistance, to prosecute this comfortable truth in the following manner.

I. I shall confirm the truth of the doctrine from scripture-testimony.

II. Offer some cautions upon it, for preventing mistakes in this point.

III. Give some of the qualities or properties of this joy.

IV. Exhibit some of the grounds and foundations of this spiritual joy.

V. Shew why the Lord is pleased to favour young converts with this joy, upon the first believing act.

VI. Shew the difference betwixt the believer's joy and that of the hypocrite, that none may deceive themselves with a false joy.

VII. Lastly, Make application of the whole.

I. I am to confirm the truth of the doctrine, That



very often the first act of faith in conversion is accompanied with joy.

This is clear from scripture-testimony, 1 Pet. i. 8. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Here is a flood of joy, joy and joy unspeakable, and joy full of glory. Know ye any thing of this joy? It is better felt, I assure you, than it can be told. It is not like the criminal flashes of joy that is in sinners, which we call sensual or diabolical. (1.) Sensual, which epicures feel in the voluptuous pleasures and sports of life, Eccl. xi. 9. "They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in mirth," Job xxi. 12. 13. (2.) Neither is this joy like that which divines justly call diabolical: whereof there are three sorts. The first is to joy in sin. The second, to joy at the misery of God's church and people, as the Ammonites, who rejoiced in despite with all their heart against the land of Israel, Ezek. xxv. 6. The third illusive, when Satan tickles the hearts of men with a kind of delusive joy.

But there is a spiritual joy, and that not temporary, but lasting and abiding. It is called in scripture the joy of God's elect, and is that which is here meant. This joy is sometimes a duty, and sometimes a sign. The first a man brings to God's service, performing it with a cheerful heart. The other, viz. joy as a sign, God gives it as a token of acceptance of the man or of the woman, and of their services. In this sense I here understand it. This spiritual joy is given in the use of means, and attendance upon ordinances, and in the actings of faith, Cant. ii. 3. "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." That is, I was scorched with the wrath of God, and with the curses and thunderings of the law: here I found no rest, no satisfaction nor delight,

till I came and was arked into Christ the blessed refuge and sanctuary for souls; I got the cool shadow of the person and offices of Christ. Thus the Ethiopian eunuch went on his way homeward rejoicing, having a merry heart, upon his finding Christ and his grace, Acts viii. 39. This joy is bottomed on Christ, Rom. v. 2. *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* We own it is an affection proper to the next life; but you know some birds sing in winter: so Rom. xii. 12. *Rejoicing in hope.* Acts xiii. 52. the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost; so that their hearts could hold no more. Worldly joy is scanty, unstable, and vanishing; it cannot satisfy nor secure the heart. Take away the creatures from the worldling, and you take away his joy; the object lieth without him. But *your joy*, says Christ, *shall no man take from you*, John xvi. 22. They cannot plunder you of peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost. This ravisheth the heart, as in 1 Pet. i. 8. forecited, "Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Phil. iv. 7. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." It is better felt than expressed. A creature worketh it not, but a divine operation. Paul heard in heaven *ῥηματα ἀπύκτα*, unspeakable words, wordless words. Joy being a foretaste of heaven, cannot be conceived or expressed. You cannot imagine how sweet it is, and still it increaseth, till we come to heaven, and lose ourselves in these eternal ravishments.

II. I shall give you some precautions to prevent mistakes.

1. There may be a kind of joy in some of the hearers of the gospel, where there is no true believing. Thus the stony-ground hearers received the word with joy.
2. As there may be joy without believing, so there may be believing without sensible joy.
3. Upon the first act of believing, the seed of joy is sown in the heart.



4. The feelings of this joy are up and down; yet, when the joy is gone, the right remaineth, and this joy will be fulfilled, John xvi. 22. "Ye now have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." If we lose it ourselves, it is not utterly lost. The sun is always moving, but he doth not always shine and display his rays, with a merry countenance; so a Christian meeteth with many rubs, but still he holds on his course to heaven, and therefore where sense faileth, faith should make supply.

5. This joy, after it is obtained by the believer, is more felt afterwards in adversity than prosperity, 1 Pet. i. 6. "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." Rom. v. 3. *We glory in tribulations*, 2 Cor. i. 5. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

6. The highest feeling of this joy, is many times to those that have tasted the bitterness of sorrow, II. lvii. 18. "I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comfort to him, and to his mourners." Jer. xxxi. 18. 20. "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." Unutterable groans making way for ineffable joys, they feel the most lively elevation of joy, as a recompense for the pangs of the new birth.

III. I shall give you some of the properties of this joy.

1. It is superlative, Psal. iv. 7. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that

“their corn and wine increased.” They had two harvests; one for their fruits, another for their vines. We read of the *joy in harvest*, Is. ix. 3. The time of harvest, and the coming in of corn and increase of it, is in its own nature a time of great rejoicing. Yet I have more joy in thee. It cannot be but a great joy, that the whole Trinity is engaged in working and infusing it. The wise production of it speaks this. It is by a creating power: *Thou hast put gladness in my heart.*—It is true, and cannot be denied, but that religion has its sadnesses as well as its joys: but these sadnesses end in joy. There is sadness and sorrow from the sight and sense of sin and guilt; but then there is joy from repentance for sin, and the apprehension of sin pardoned. What is the ground and matter of true joy? Why, surely it is God pacified and reconciled in Christ. Hence peace is joined with joy, Rom. xiv. 17. “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

2. Believers are passive in joy: *Thou hast put gladness into my heart.* It is of God’s putting into the heart. Of ourselves we have nothing but despair and trouble, Is. lviii. 19. “I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord: and I will heal him.” He works it himself, and causes it by his Spirit: hence called *joy in the Holy Ghost*, 1 Thess. i. 6.

3. It is permanent and lasting, John xvi. 22. *Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.* Their persecutors could take away their means, their estate, and their life, but could not take away their joy. Thus it is said, Is. xxxv. 10. “The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

4. It is peculiar joy: there is not a grain of it given to the wicked. They have a kind of joy, but it



is not this joy; neither is their joy permanent, Eeck. viii. 9. "As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of a fool;" a sudden blaze, that soon evanisheth.

IV. The next head is to shew, what are the grounds of the believers joy.

Here consider, (1.) The actings of faith. (2.) The object of it. (3.) The day of their conversion. And, (4.) Some of those things that maintain this joy.

(1.) The actings of faith. As,

(1.) The knowledge of Christ. "Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." So when a man gets believing views of God in Christ reconciling the world to himself, it cannot but beget joy in him, If. liii. 10.

(2.) Assent to the principles of the doctrine of Christ; so especially to these two, that he has need of a Saviour, and that Christ is the only all-sufficient Saviour.

(3.) Recumbency, or relying upon Christ alone for salvation, Acts xvi. 31. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." A man under a heavy burden, that is ready to weigh him down, as well as to retard him in his way, it certainly will be joy to him to get rest and help. So much more in this case, Psal. xxxiv. 4. "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad."

(4.) The actual receiving of Christ as a Saviour to a man in particular, cannot but create joy, as it did to Zaccheus in the text, who *received Christ joyfully*.

2. Consider the glorious and amiable object of their faith and love, the blessed Redeemer and Mediator Jesus Christ, the great ordinance of God for salvation to sinners, and their only Saviour. "I found him," says the spouse, *whom my soul loveth*.

3. Another ground of believers joy is their conversion-day.

(1.) Because this is a day of liberty. Now the law-ful captive is loosed, now the bond slave is made a free man in Christ, the alien a citizen of Zion, &c.

2. It is a day of great victory. The devil the strong man is overcome, and his goods are thrown out; sin is subdued, victory over the world and the flesh is commenced, and shall certainly be obtained in the issue.

(3.) It is a marriage-day. Faith matches us with Christ; and is not this a joyful day? Is. lxvi. 13. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you: and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb."

(4.) It is a coronation-day. Among the Romans the bridegroom crowned the bride with a crown of laurels; so Christ puts on believers a crown, though not material, yet infinitely more precious than gold, and makes them *kings and priests to God*, Rev. i. 5. 6.

4. Consider what furnishes and maintains this joy in believers.

(1.) Regeneration. When Christ comes to the soul, it revives as the corn, and grows as the vine. The seed of spiritual joy is sown in the heart; it produces increase, and repeated acts of faith strengthen and enliven it.

(2.) There is a real union betwixt Christ and the believer. "He is the vine," says the believer, "and I am a branch ingrafted into him." The believer is justified upon the first act of faith, he gets on the mantle of Christ's righteousness; he is brought into a new family, serves a new master, is admitted into new company, obtains rich advantages, and gets inexpressibly great wages, the effect of pure grace, for all his services; and is *filled with joy and peace in believing*.

V. I now proceed to assign the reasons why the Lord gives this joy upon the first believing.

1. To signify his acceptance of believers. The pro-



dignity might have said, How shall I be assured, that my offended Father, whose honour I have slighted, whose commands I have disobeyed, whose talents I have misimproved, and whose goods I have riotously squandered away, will receive me again into favour? To convince him of his willingness and sincerity, he meets him half-way and more, falls on his neck, and kisses him; and says unto his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry. It was meet," continues he, "that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found," Luke xv. 22. 23. 32. And thus his acceptance is fully signified and confirmed. Was it ever thus, or is it thus with thee?

2. The believer gives the Lord a glad heart, and the Lord will give the believer a glad one. He delighteth in the prosperity of his saints; they are his charge, John xv. 11. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Would you make Christ's heart glad, keep your own cheerful, saying with David, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord," Psal. xxxiv. 2.

3. This joy is as it were God's seal clapt to the act of faith; it is joy in the Holy Ghost.

4. This is necessary for the believing soul, that had the arrows of God, dipt in venom, sticking fast in his soul, to have them now pulled out, and his heart filled with spiritual joy. O what unspeakable joy is now given to the believing soul!

5. Because of the great use of it in the spiritual life, to make us to do and suffer: Neh. viii. 10. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." This is as oil to the wheels, that makes them roll on smoothly and sweetly.

It is a question, Which is most useful, godly joy

or godly sorrow? Sorrow makes us serious, joy active. But why should we divide what God hath joined? Both are wrought by the same Spirit. He is a Comforter, and he descended in the form of a mourning dove. But certainly joy doth more quicken us in well-doing. It renders the functions of body and mind free and vigorous, that we may walk with alacrity and a good conscience. The joy that is here given, is not a wanton joy, by which all labour and care is cast away, and the person abandons himself to ease, and so his life is nothing but a continued recreation; but it is such as enables believers to go about their duties and calling with pleasure and comfort. It must be extremely sweet, when a man, by the refreshings of the Spirit, can go about the business which God hath given him to do with comfort; Acts xx. 24. "Neither count I my life dear to me," says Paul, "so that I might finish my course with joy." Thus it was with the eunuch, Acts viii. 39. And "he went on his way rejoicing."

VI. I come now to shew the difference between the joy of hypocrites and that of believers.

I. The joy of the hypocrite is from temporary prospects and respects in religion, the effect of gain, honour, and applause in a religious profession; but the case is otherwise with the believer, who can say with Paul, Phil. iii. 8, 9. "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

2. The Spirit of God is the root and spring of the believer's joy: but carnal objects and gratifications are the source of the hypocrite's joy.



3. The hypocrite's joy is merely superficial, and has no solid root: whereas that of the believer is deeply rooted in the heart, as being the work of the divine Spirit.

4. The hypocrite's joy is not lasting and persevering, but vanishes away like his temporary faith. But the believer's joy arising from God, and a sense of interest in his covenant and favour, though that sense may sometimes be under a cloud, or languid, yet it will revive by the cherishing influences of the Spirit, and persevere, till hope be at last swallowed up in fruition.

5. The hypocrite's joy leaves a person whenever he leaves that duty which administered the joy. A fancied interest in the favour of God and the privileges of the gospel, when these things are new to the man, may mightily affect him for a while; but not feeling their powerful efficacy on his heart, they grow stale and sapless to him; and so his joy therein comes to a period. He may take pleasure for a season in the performance of religious duties; but *will he always call on God, and delight in him?* No; he leaves duty, and so all the joy he took therein is gone. But the believer, out of a sense of love to God, and gratitude for the divine favour shewn to him, perseveres in a course of obedience to the commands of God, and in the performance of the duties enjoined him by his heavenly Father; and so is in the way in which joy is to be met with; for the word and ordinances are the means of nourishing and increasing it, as I have already shewn.

I come now to the application of this subject.

1. See here the goodness of God, who hath made our wages a great part of our work, and our reward our service. How wonderful is it that he should deal so bountifully with us in this life! The world might be a *Bochim*, and it is a *Beracha*; it is indeed a vale of tears. But yet the sun shines sometimes when it rains. Oh! how shoul' this make us enamoured with the

service of God! They are happy that minister in his presence. It is an agreeable request, Psal. xc. 14. "O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." Certainly God allows us to come with such requests; for he commands us to rejoice, 1 Thess. v. 16. *Rejoice evermore.* We might weep evermore, but he says, *Rejoice evermore.*

2. See here the folly of those who foolishly look upon the ways of God as if they were dark and uncomfortable; as if the consequence of engaging in a religious life were to abandon and renounce all delight and pleasure. O that wicked men would but make trial of religion! they would then find their mistake, and see their egregious folly in standing aloof from religion as an enemy to joy and comfort. God does not require you to renounce delight by embracing his ways, but to change the course of it. Don't think the practice of religion is full of sadness and heaviness. Will you be pleased to believe the spies that have been in the land of promise. The righteous are only fit to give testimony to the comfort of a converted state. A stranger intermeddles not with their joy.

3. See and learn where to obtain solid joy; not in the dreggy insipid delights of time and worldly things, but in Christ, who hath made full provision for our consolation. O then don't seek pleasure and joy in any thing but him who is the desire of all nations, and in the enjoyment of whom true delight consists. God hath debarred us from no joy but what is hurtful to us. Godliness doth not unman us, nor hinder the course of any true natural affection. But no external thing should be our chief joy, but only the Lord, Phil. iv. 4.

4. This doctrine serves for reproof to two sorts of persons.

1<sup>st</sup>, To those who are always sad. It is the fault of many Christians, that they do not live up to the care and provision which Christ has made for them. In



scripture, the command is, *Rejoice evermore*, 1 Thess. v. 16. but they live, as if the Lord had said, *Weep evermore*. It is certainly a great fault, however disguised. In some it deserves pity, in others chiding and rebuke. In some it deserves pity, that are under penal disturbance. When God puts any into the stocks of conscience, they cannot come out at pleasure. These are irresistible chains; and a poor creature lies bound, till God says, Go forth. It is easy for those that stand upon the shore, to say to those who are tossed upon the waves, Sail thus. They are tugging for life. The cause is beyond our direction and their choice. Such persons are to be pitied, and yet counselled. Besides God's power, we mingle much of our own obstinacy and peevishness, as Rachel would not be comforted, Jer. xxxi. 15. We are to invite them to Christ, and they are bound to hearken to the invitation. Their present duty is to come to Christ for ease, Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That is the only gracious issue of soul-troubles. As Christ cried, *My God*, on the cross; so their duty is to claim an interest in God as their own God by faith; and this will make joy spring up in their hearts.—Again, others are to be chidden. It is a sad thing, that Christians should not have the wisdom to make use of their own felicity. We often hug a distemper, instead of a duty, as if God were better pleased with dolorous impressions than cheerful services: "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men," Lam. iii. 33. He will not do so with his heart. Baal's priests gashed themselves to please their idol, but God delighteth in the prosperity of his servants. Some think there is somewhat of merit and satisfaction in what is afflictive; it is a kind of revenge they take on themselves. God hath required sorrow to mortify sin, but not to satisfy justice. He would have us triumph in Christ, whilst we groan under the body of death. O rejoice more in God.

When a king advances a man to an eminent post about his person, and the man is always sad before him, he is angry. Thus it fared with Nehemiah, chap. ii. 2. "Why is thy countenance sad?" said Artaxerxes to him, "seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart." Though men are prejudiced against godly joy, let me tell you, it is a fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. It is a great privilege of Christ's spiritual kingdom, Rom. xiv. 17. It is an help in the spiritual life, Neh. viii. 10. It is as wings to the birds of paradise, that makes them fly higher.

Well then consider these things. This sadness unfits you for duty; it darkens the ways of God, and brings a scandal upon Christ's spiritual kingdom. What cause have ye always to be sad? It must be either your afflictions or your sins.

As to afflictions, if your eyes were opened, and earthly affections mortified, you would see no cause of grief. It can never be so ill with a Christian, but he hath matter of rejoicing. Nothing can deprive you of God, or of your interest in Christ. *Are the consolations of God small unto thee?* Job xv. 11. that they cannot counterbalance worldly afflictions, Heb. xii. 11. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Affliction doth but seem bitter; carnal sense is not a fit judge of the matter. Your affliction cannot be greater than your comfort.

As for your sins; joy, I confess, is proper to God's children, behaving themselves as such. But, may ye say, what shall we do? I answer, There is a time to mourn, and this is the season of it, Num. xii. 14. It is good to be sensible of the displeasure of a father. Ay, but in this heaviness there should be a mixture of joy. Though there be a time to mourn, yet *rejoice evermore*. And therefore we should mix joy with our sorrows. We have to do with a God that is not implacable; he mixes love with his frowns; in the midst



of judgement he remembereth mercy, Jer. iii. 14.  
 "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for  
 I am married unto you." God does not forget his  
 relation to us, and so we should not forget our rela-  
 tion to him. Come to me again, says he, and I will  
 make up all breaches between you and me. A belie-  
 ver may fall grievously, but not finally. He does not  
 fall so, but that God takes hold of him, and we  
 should learn to take hold of God. Labour to recover  
 your former condition, that you may freely rejoice  
 again. By this means love will be renewed and  
 strengthened.

2dly; The other sort are those that would rejoice,  
 but do not provide matter of joy. A man cannot re-  
 joice in God till he hath some interest in him. We  
 are told in the sacred history, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. that  
 when David had lost all at Ziklag, and the people  
 spoke of stoning him, that he *encouraged himself in the*  
*Lord his God.* Pray mark the expression, *his God*. God  
 out of Christ is terrible; but God in covenant, or in  
 Christ, is sweet to the believing soul. So Hab. iii. 18.  
 "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of  
 my salvation." When all things fail, a child of  
 God has recourse to his interest in God as his God in  
 covenant. All are bound to provide matter for joy,  
 but not all to rejoice. Therefore clear up your in-  
 terest in God in Christ as your Saviour, if you would  
 rejoice to purpose.

5. To raise your minds to the exercise of this joy,  
 be more careful to maintain peace and joy. To help  
 you to this, I shall shew what reason a Christian has  
 to rejoice, and by what means he may get, keep, and  
 maintain joy.

1st, What reasons hath a Christian to rejoice?  
 The causes of joy may be referred to his past state, his  
 present interest, and his future hopes.

(1.) The remembrance of his past estate. A Chri-  
 stian may stand wondering at the change which the  
 God of all grace hath made in his soul, 1 Pet. ii. 9,

“That ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” The light is the more sweet and marvellous, because of the foregoing darkness. Past miseries are sweet in the remembrance. It will be a part of our happiness in heaven to look back, as travellers in the inn discourse of the danger and dirtiness of the way they passed through, and as mariners safely arrived on shore, of the dangers they encountered on the tempestuous ocean. It is matter of renewed joy, to see how the weeds of sin are rooted out, how the buds of grace begin to grow in the garden of our hearts. No man looks on the sea with greater comfort, than he that hath escaped the perils of shipwreck. As the Israelites, when they saw the Egyptians lie dead on the sea-shore, sung a song of triumph, Exod. xv. so does a Christian rejoice, when he considers his change, what he was formerly, and what he is now.

(2.) His present interest, sense, and feeling. We have mercies in hand, as well as mercies in hope; something exhibited, as well as something promised; God’s eternal love, with all the blessings that issue thence, such as justification, adoption, sanctification, &c. Paul triumphs in these, Acts viii. 37. God hath adopted believers to be his children, and heirs of the heavenly kingdom. If the world makes war against them, they have peace with God, they are in a reconciled state. In frame of heart they are regenerate; they have the first fruits of the Spirit, sweet experience of gracious operations; they eat clusters of the grapes, and drink the wine of heaven: they have communion with God, though banished from men, and reduced to the greatest difficulties.

(3.) His future hopes, Heb. iii. 6. “If we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of hope firm unto the end.” We are heirs apparent to the crown of heaven. We may rejoice in what we possess, and we may glory in what we hope for. The thought of this must ravish the heart. We shall have what infi-



inite mercy will bestow, infinite merit purchased, and the ample promises of the covenant of grace have revealed. The body of sin will be destroyed in the future world; we shall be out of the reach of all temptations, and be possessed of all the felicity we can wish for, felicity far greater than we now can form any just idea of.

readly, I shall shew by what means we are to maintain this spiritual joy. God hath appointed graces and ordinances for this end.

(1.) Graces; faith, hope, and obedience.

[1.] Faith. This is a help to joy. It represents the excellency, truth, and reality of spiritual things. That which we rejoice in must be good, real, and present. All joy ariseth from the presence of some good, either in actual possession or firm expectation. This doth faith, Heb. x. 34. "Knowing in yourselves, that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." It is the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. Faith sets up a stage in the heart of a believer, where God is represented acting whatever he hath promised, and distributing all the blessings of the covenant. Hence it cannot but exult with joy; and every repeated act of faith will excite and strengthen the joy.

[2.] Hope. This depends much on faith. It is an earnest elevation of the mind, to look for what faith counteth real. Now hope ravishes the soul, as if it had its head above the clouds, Rom. xii. 12. *Rejoicing in hope.* Joy is proper to enjoyment, but hope serves instead of enjoyment. Believers feast and entertain their souls with their glorious hopes.

[3.] Obedience. Faith gives the title, hope the sight, and obedience the evidence; and therefore it is necessary to the establishing of joy. Nay it hath an effective influence on it. It is God's method: first, he poureth in the oil of grace, before the oil of gladness, Heb. vii. 2. Rom. xiv. 17. Sin takes away joy

and peace; the whole strength of men and angels, cannot make the conscience of a sinner rejoice. Yea, the children of God must take heed, that they do not violate peace of conscience by allowing the least sin. You are to walk so, that you may be in a condition capable of joy, Acts ix. 31. "They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." O, that is a sweet couple.

(2.) Ordinances. I shall name them.

[1.] The word. The joy that hypocrites have is from the word, Heb. vi. 5. *They have tasted the good word of God.* A temporary faith finds joy in the word. All the fault is, it is but a taste, some slight experience, which they do not continue and maintain. Here is represented fuel for faith and hope, God's infinite mercy, Christ's infinite merits, and the glory of the next world. Joy is as it were the blaze of the soul, love keepeth the fire burning. But now, if we would have it blaze and flame up, we must come to the word, for that is the bellows to blow it up. When the angel preached the gospel, he said, "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." We come to hear gladness from heaven. Though an angel be not the messenger, yet the message is the same: God opens his heart and mind to us in his word.

[2.] Prayer, wherein we open our hearts to God. It has a pacative virtue. Many psalms begin with anguish, and end with triumph, as if the psalmist had received good news, that his affairs were altered. When Hannah had prayed, her countenance was no more sad, 1 Sam. i. 8. God is the Father of mercies, the God of consolations, 2 Cor. i. 4. The nearer we come to him, the nearer we are to the fountain of joy. There are joys felt in prayer, by retiring into God's presence, Psal. xvi. 11. *In thy presence is fulness of joy.* Heaven is a place of joy, because of the constant communion the saints have with him there.



When we pray here, God does not love to send us a way sad.

[3.] Sacraments, because of the sweet experiences to be had there, Cant. i. 4. "We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." Heb. vi. 18. When our Lord and his apostles, after partaking of the first Christian communion, had sung an hymn, they went out to the mount of olives, though it was a sad time. Thus the eunuch having been baptized by Philip, went on his way rejoicing. It is not the bread and wine in the sacrament that rejoices the heart, but the renewing of the covenant.

[4.] Meditation. It refreshes the soul, and feeds joy. It is the proper and natural use of reason. A son takes pleasure in a history wherein are recorded his father's valiant acts. Meditation is a pure recreation. O the sweetness arising from meditating on the glorious work of redemption, and on the excellency of glory! Here the thoughts are sent as spies into the land of promise; here we have a Pisgah-sight of the heavenly Canaan. It gives us a foretaste and prelibation of heaven, and fills our souls with joy and gladness.

On the whole, if ye would experience spiritual joy, come to Christ by faith; and if ye would cherish and maintain it, seek the influences of the Spirit, exercise the graces of his implantation, and carefully attend all the ordinances of divine institution. By these means you will be enabled to rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of your salvation.

## DISCOURSE XII.

The Duty of rejoicing in the Lord always explained and enforced \*.

PHILIPPIANS iv. 4.

*Rejoice in the Lord always : and again I say, Rejoice.*

THE words I have read are not many ; they are very brief, and therefore may be easily remembered and carried away by an attentive hearer. And as you have had large allowances on the late solemn occasion, these words come to acquaint you of and press you to a part of your after necessary work and duty. They do not urge a painful, but a very pleasant duty ; and therefore you should be the more easily induced to practise it : *Rejoice in the Lord always, &c.*

The apostle Paul, when he wrote this epistle, was a prisoner at Rome for the gospel of Christ. It was his second imprisonment, and he was not far from being offered up a sacrifice for the gospel he had preached. This gospel the Philippians had heard him preach ; and the godly Philippians having heard of his imprisonment, sent so far as from Philippi to Rome to visit him, and supply his wants. This was a gracious temper, which God will ever reward. God hath a blessing in store for such as consider the necessities of his dear children. Paul is not so much concerned with his own bonds and imprisonment, as about the estate of his beloved Philippians. Epaphroditus tells him, that there were heresies and false doctrines that had got in among them, but yet they stood fast. Herein Paul rejoices, writes this

\* This discourse, consisting of several sermons, was delivered at Marytown, after the sacrament, in 1728.



epistle to them, and exhorts them in the most affectionate terms, ver. 1. *Stand fast in the Lord*, as knowing their labour should not be in vain in the Lord. And lest they should be afflicted too much at his bonds, or discouraged from duty by the apprehension of difficulties, he exhorts them not only to stand fast in the faith, but to do this and their other pieces of work cheerfully, as in the words of the text, *Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.*

It must be acknowledged, that when we look more intrinsically into the nature of this duty, it is not so easy, as some may imagine it to be. Every one cannot receive this saying. It is hard to keep the heart in such an exact frame as to rejoice always; as Christ saith in another case, Matth. xix. 12. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." We purpose through grace to prove it to be a duty incumbent on all Christians, and that at all times. The text urges and enforces it, *Rejoice in the Lord, &c.* In which words we have,

1. The duty exhorted to, viz. to rejoice.
2. The object of our delectation, *the Lord.*
3. The season when and how long the duty is to be exercised, or the constancy and perpetuity thereof, *always*; that is, at all times, and in all states and conditions of life. The mandate is doubled, to shew the necessity of the duty. It is to be our daily work, an holy festival that will last during our whole lives.

The text affords the following doctrine.

DOCT. *It is the becoming and necessary duty of the people of God, to rejoice in the Lord always, or at all times, and under all conditions.*

The generality of the children of men do greedily seek after pleasure and delight. In Christianity it is not only a part of our wages, but much of our very work. It is the will of God: 1 Thess. v. 18. "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of

Disc. 12. *The Duty of rejoicing in the Lord.* 347

“God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” And the law of the Mediator binds us to delight in God, as well as the primitive duty which we owe to God as Creator. Christ enjoins it, John xvi. 23. *Be of good cheer.* And the apostle presses the doctrine in the text, and in 1 Thess. v. 16. *Rejoice evermore.*

In handling the doctrine, I shall,

I. Shew what rejoicing the apostle means.

II. How this must be constant and perpetual.

III. Give reasons for enforcing the duty upon us.

IV. Apply.

I. I am to shew what rejoicing the apostle means, while he exhorts to rejoice always. For understanding of this we are to know, that there are several kinds of rejoicing; as,

1. Natural joy; which arises from the enjoyment of something good and useful to nature, such as health, strength, necessary accommodations, and the like.

2. There is a carnal, secular, and worldly joy; which arises from the possession of things good in the esteem of the world; such as David speaks of when corn, wine, and oil are increased, Psal. iv. 7. and as *the joy of the harvest*, spoken of Is. ix. 3. This, though commendable in its own place and measure, is by no means meant in our text. This is a carnal rejoicing, such only as that poor wretch had, of whom you read, Luke xii. 19. “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.”

3. There is, as some call it, a criminal joy; which Solomon taxeth in the wicked as a mark of a hellish disposition, Prov. ii. 14. They “rejoice to do evil, and delight in the frowardness of the wicked.” Jer. xi. 15. “When thou dost evil, then thou rejoicest.”

4. There is a holy and spiritual joy or rejoicing, which the apostle calls *joy in the Holy Ghost*, Rom. xiv.



17. This rejoicing differs from the former in two things especially.

(1.) In the ground or matter of rejoicing; which in spiritual joy is the favour of God, that he is propitious unto us, and bestows upon us the precious fruits and blessed pledges of his love, in the pardon of our sins, in the sanctification of our natures, and in giving us the hope of glory.

(2.) In the manner of rejoicing. In things natural or secular there may be a kind of holy and spiritual rejoicing; as when we joy in them, not simply as they are good to nature and this present state of life, but as they are pledges of God's favour, and furtherances and helps to a better life. The Israelites in this respect were commanded to rejoice before the Lord, in all they put their hands unto, Lev. xxiii. 40. They had their annual festivals to manifest their rejoicing in God's favour, even testified in temporal blessings, Neh. viii. 15.

The text must be understood of holy and spiritual joy. Of this joy the apostle speaks also to the Philippians, chap. iii. 1. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord*: and here further presses the duty. So that it is none of the other kinds of joy that the apostle here intends. Nature in these needeth a bridle rather than a spur. But to the latter he warmly exhorts, namely, spiritual joy, delight in God, and in all things that come from and lead to God.

Now, this delighting ourselves in God must be a little further explained. 1. As to its delectable object. 2. As to its lively acts. 3. As to its solid effects. And by these its nature will be a little unfolded unto you.

*First*, As to the precious object of our rejoicing, it is God.

1. God himself, as God, is a lovely being, and the object of our delight: for he is good, even before and without the apprehension of his doing good, Psal. cxix. 68, *Thou art good, and dost good.* God's essen-

tial goodness is not (I own) the first inviting motive to draw our hearts to him, but his beneficent goodness. Yet the infinite perfection of his nature is also an object of our love and delight. As the angelical host admire and adore God, not only for his benefits, but also for his holiness, sovereign majesty and dominion, *Is. vi. 3. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory: so should we, who are bound to praise and serve God on earth, as he is praised and served in heaven, Matth. vi. 10.*

Admire him and delight in him for his immaculate purity and holiness, and the infinite perfection of his nature. Surely we are not only to bless him, but to praise him, *Psal. cxlv. 2. Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. ver. 10. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee.* These two words have their distinct refer-

ences, blessing to his benefits, and praise to his excellencies; and when we praise God for his glorious being, we should do it in a delightful manner, *Psal. cxxxv. 3. Praise ye the Lord, for the Lord is good: sing praises unto his name, for it is pleasant.* It is pleasant and delightful to think or speak of, and to shew forth the excellencies of his glorious and exalted Majesty.

Again, his holiness is an amiable thing, and therefore the object of our delectation. If we are to delight in the saints because of their holiness, though they have never done us good, *Psal. xvi. 3. To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight;* if we are to account them the excellent ones of the earth, because of the image and beauty of God that is upon them; then surely we are much more to love God, not only because of his benefits, but because of his holiness. Moreover, if we are to love the law of God, and to delight in it as it is pure, as David did, *Psal. cxix. 140. Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it;* then surely we are to love God also, because of the immaculate purity of his nature, and to delight in him,



Though this be not the only reason of our love to God and delight in him, yet surely it is one. But,

2. As God himself considered as God is the object of our delight and rejoicing; so we are to delight and rejoice in God as he hath discovered himself to us in Christ. This is the foundation of his beneficent goodness, and the greatest discovery of the amiable nature of God, that ever was made to the creature, John iii. 16. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Rom. v. 8. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—That we might not conceive God to be all wrath and inexorable, unless upon hard terms. Christ came as the express image of his person, full of grace and truth. God reconciled in Christ is the life and spirit of all our joy and gladness, 2 Cor. v. 18. 19. In Christ we see God accessible, near to us, and within the reach of our commerce, as dwelling in our nature. In Christ we see him gracious and propitious to us, ready to do us good, Luke i. 46. 47. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." We have a great and good God in Christ; he is God and our Saviour.

3. And not only are we to rejoice in God as he has revealed himself in Christ, but also in the blessed fruits of our redemption, and in all those spiritual blessings which are offered or given to us by our blessed Lord; such as reconciliation, or God's admitting us into the privileges of his covenant, Rom. v. 11. "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." When once this is clear, then the cause of all our sadness and drooping discouragements is taken out of the way.

The great cause of our bondage and fears is the quarrel God hath against us by reason of sin. We can never be soundly comforted till that be taken up; for so long as we apprehend him to be an enemy and

an avenger, we cannot rejoice in him, Psal. xxxiii. 11. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart." The psalmist speaks of the pardon of sins; it is David's matchless instruction from his own experience. He begins the psalm, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," &c. and he concludes, "Rejoice ye upright." A man who is condemned for some criminal offence, and ready to be executed, O what joy hath he when he has received his pardon! So we should rejoice in God, who are as it were brought back again from the gibbet, and have received our atonement. So also we should rejoice in the gift of the Holy Spirit to sanctify, renew, and heal our natures. If the angels who are but spectators and lookers on, do rejoice in the conversion of a sinner, Luke xv. 10. should not the parties interested much more rejoice? So likewise we should rejoice in the hopes of glory, Luke x. 20. "Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Rom. v. 2. "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

4. We are said to rejoice in God, when we delight to do his will, and are by his grace fitted and disposed for his use, service, and worship. To be set and kept in the way to heaven, is a greater comfort to believers than if they had all the world bestowed upon them: Psal. cxix. 14. "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches." David had experience of both as a puissant king, and as God's servant. 2 Cor. v. 12. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

In carnal rejoicing men seek to conceal the grounds of their joy, as being ashamed of them. The worldling secretly rejoices in his bags, the voluptuous man in the instruments of his pleasures, the glutton in his dishes, and the drunkard in his pots; but none



of them will openly say, This is my rejoicing. But a Christian dares own his joy; This is my rejoicing, that God hath taught me his ways, and enabled me to walk in them, &c.

5. We rejoice in God, when we rejoice in the blessings of his providence, as they come from and lead to God: Joel ii. 23. "Be glad ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month." So also in God's care in protecting us: Psal. v. 11. "Let all those that put their trust in thee, rejoice; let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name, be joyful in thee." These common favours and benefits manifest God's respect to us, and should be as a step to the Lord's people, to lead them up to rejoice in God the Lord. This was God's quarrel with his people of old, Deut. xxviii. 47. 48. "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things: therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee." Whatever we have, we should look upon it as a token of God's love to us, and so rejoice in them, not as satisfied with these worldly things, but as they direct us to God. Carnal men rejoice in the creature, but in a carnal and sensual manner: their joy neither arises in God, nor ends in him, but in the things they possess.

*Secondly,* This spiritual joy may be considered as to its lively acts; and that in solemn duties; as the word, the charter of our hopes, and meditation thereon, and upon those ravishing mysteries contained in it. So likewise the Lord's supper, whereby the worthy communicant is brought to the suburbs of glory, and

feasted with the dainties of heaven, and is made in a day of his power to see the King in his beauty, upon his espousal and coronation day, Cant. iii. 11. Does it not do good to your hearts to think of Christ, to hear of him and from him, to see him, and taste of his goodness? Cant. i. 4. "We will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine." Psal. xxii. 26. "The meek shall eat, and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live for ever." Heb. xi. 13. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them:" when they thought of it, the time of the gospel was a sweet time to them; and so it is to all other believers.

*Thirdly,* This spiritual rejoicing may be considered as to its solid effects.

1. It is such a joy as doth enlarge our hearts in duty, and strengthen us in the ways of God, Neh. viii. 10. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." It is compared to oil, Psal. xlv. 7. "The oil of gladness." Psal. cxix. 14. "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches." The hardest services are pleasant to one that delights in Christ. This joy is the very life of obedience. A Christian cannot be without it. It enables us for the performance of those duties that God requires of us.

2. It sweetens our calamities and crosses.

(1.) Common afflictions. It can never be so sad with us in the world, but we have cause of rejoicing in Christ. Hear the prophet on this head, Hab. iii. 17. 18. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." The want of these terrene things should not diminish the solid satisfaction and content of our souls. It is du-



table joy, John xvi. 22. "I will see you again, and  
 "your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man ta-  
 "keth from you."

(2.) It sweetens the afflictions of the gospel, as in  
 Luke vi. 23. "Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for  
 "joy: for behold your reward is great in heaven:  
 "for in like manner did their fathers unto the pro-  
 "phets." Heb. x. 34. — "Ye took joyfully the  
 "spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that  
 "ye have in heaven a better and an enduring sub-  
 "stance."

3. It draws us off from the vain delights of the  
 flesh. Every man must have some oblectation; for  
 love and delight cannot lie idle in the soul. Either it  
 is taken up with the joys of sense, or with the joys  
 of faith. And it is good for every man to observe  
 what it is that puts gladness in his heart, in what his  
 solid contentment and pleasure lies. A brutish heart  
 fetches all its solaces from the world, but a gracious  
 heart from Christ. The one loves pleasures more than  
 God or Christ; but to the other Christ and his bene-  
 fits are his matter of joy and comfort. This is what  
 cheers believers; and when they get more of Christ  
 into their hearts, then they say, as Psal. iv. 7. "Thou  
 "hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the  
 "time that their corn and their wine increased." They  
 need not carnal mirth, for their delight is in  
 God. This is evident by the whole drift and current  
 of holy scripture. One of the angelical host thus be-  
 spoke the shepherds at Christ's birth, Luke ii. 10. "Be-  
 "hold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which  
 "shall be to all people." Surely tidings of Christ,  
 the Redeemer of the world, are tidings of great joy;  
 because then there was a way found out for our re-  
 conciliation with God, and the taking up of that  
 dreadful controversy between us and him; that hea-  
 ven and earth may kiss each other, and meet again  
 in a court of love, peace, and grace, purchased by  
 Christ, whereby we might overcome the devil, the

world, and the flesh. The great enemies of our salvation are defeated, and a proportionable happiness is found out for man, without which he would have been like leviathan in a little pool.

So when this grace was offered to any, they received it joyfully; as when Zaccheus was told by our Saviour, that salvation was come to his house, it is said, *He made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully*, Luke xix. 6. And when the glad tidings of salvation through Christ were published to the Gentiles, it is said, *they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord*, Acts xiii. 48. Now we are concerned in this matter as well as they: How then stand your hearts affected hereto? Our necessities are the same with theirs, and the benefits are offered to us as well as them. The virgin Mary was thus affected, Luke i. 47. *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour*; that Christ was to be born of her, and was miraculously formed in her womb. The eunuch, when Philip had preached Jesus to him, and he was baptized into the faith of him, *went on his way rejoicing*; as men do that have met with a good bargain, and have sealed it, and made it sure. So the jailor, Acts xvi. 34. *rejoiced, believing in God with all his house*. Observe, he was a man but newly converted, and recovered out of the suburbs of hell, ready to kill himself a little before; so that one would have thought, you might as easily fetch water out of a flint, or a spark of fire out of the bottom of the sea, as draw joy from a person in such circumstances; yet he rejoiced when he was acquainted with Christ. So that you see none view the gospel seriously, but they find cause of joy. We cannot consider and believe the great things which Christ hath done and purchased for us, with some experience and hope of the enjoyment of them, without joy.

II. I proceed to shew how this joy must be constant and perpetual.



That we may come to this point, we are to consider the business and work of rejoicing as a grace, a privilege, and a duty. As a grace, in respect of the principle of it, joy is a fruit of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22, a spiritual or supernatural disposition wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost — As a privilege. It is a very great advantage where ever it is. So the scripture speaks about it, Prov. xv. 13. *A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance.* ver. 15. *He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.* Chap. xvii. 22. *A merry heart doth good like a medicine.* — As it is a duty, in regard of the exercise of it, it is of importance. It is not a matter of indifference to Christians whether they rejoice or not; but it is imposed on them, and expressly required of them. The scripture is very full in expressions to this purpose; as particularly Psal. xxxii. 11. “Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.” 1 Theff. v. 16. “Rejoice evermore.” God’s children have or may have cause of rejoicing in God, whatever their outward condition be, whether adverse or prosperous. To this purpose consider,

1. A state of worldly sorrow and affliction is very consistent and agreeable with our rejoicing in the Lord. The scriptures abound in the proof of this, Psal. xciv. 19. “In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.” Paul and Silas sung in the dungeon at midnight, Acts xvi. 25. *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,* 2 Cor. vi. 10. Tribulation does not disturb the pleasant harmony of a well-composed mind, because there is more matter of joy and delight in God, than can be taken from us in the creature. “I am filled with comfort,” says Paul, “I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations,” 2 Cor. vii. 4. “Your heart,” says Christ to his disciples, “shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.” Whatever falls out, God’s all-sufficiency and heaven’s happiness are everlasting grounds of rejoicing.

(1.) God's all-sufficiency is a perpetual ground of rejoicing, Hab. iii. 18. "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." A believer's right and interest in God is not made void by the blasting of the creatures.

(2.) The hope of glory remains unshaken in the midst of all distresses: Matth. v. 12. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Though all the world be against us with all its spite and hatred, yet there is more cause of joy than sorrow.

2. A state of affliction is not only consistent with this holy rejoicing, but does much promote it; partly as afflictions conduce to refine and purge the soul from the dregs of sense, and make it capable of the comforts of the Spirit, Jude 19. *sensual; having not the Spirit.* Our taste must be clarified from the feculency and dregs of sense, ere we can relish spiritual comforts, or know their worth and value.

While we flow in worldly comforts, the carnal taste is too strong upon us, and so we have mean thoughts of God's consolations. As cordials are relished best by the fainting, so these comforts relish best with the afflicted; (1.) Partly as they occasion greater experiences of God, 2 Cor. xii. 10. "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." So Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." And, (2.) As they are sanctified, and increase grace; and an increase of grace will still bring with it an increase of joy and comfort, Heb. xii. 11. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it



"yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Now, from all this you may see, that though afflictions may put a damp upon joy, yet they do not extinguish it.

*Secondly,* We must rejoice in the Lord always, in regard it is not a duty to be done now and then, or that belongs to some eminent Christians, who are assured of God's love; but from our first acquaintance with Christ till the last period of our lives, it is of use to us: which will appear in these following things.

1. There is some act of rejoicing begun at our first entrance into Christianity; and even before our interest is well settled and cleared. There are general grounds of rejoicing which oblige all; such as these, that there is a good God, and poor drooping spirits should apply themselves to him who has comforts for his mourners, *Is. lvii. 15.*; that there is a merciful and all-sufficient Saviour, that there is a gospel and covenant that brings glad tidings to poor sinners, *Luke ii. 10. 11.* "Fear not: for behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The world being fallen by sin under God's wrath and deserved condemnation, it is matter of joy, that God hath found a ransom, and that he offers pardon and life to those who seek it, and accept of it upon his blessed terms. Now, it is matter of joy before we have interest in these things. A possible conditional reconciliation with God, that a dreadful controversy is taken up, heaven and earth kissing each other, that life and immortality are brought to light, and such a blessedness is discovered as satiateth the mind of man; in short, the gospel shewing a sure way of reconciliation with God and the everlasting fruition of him in glory, the very offer of it stirs up joy in us. And where ever the gospel cometh, it hath at its first coming, upon these accounts, been entertained with

joy; as when Philip preached the gospel in Samaria, Acts viii. 8. *there was great joy in that city*; not only joy, but great joy. So it is said of the jailor, that new convert, Acts xvi. 34. that *he rejoiced*, though he was still in danger of his life, for treating those as guests, whom he should have kept as prisoners. So in 2 Cor. viii. 2. we read of *the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty*, because they were acquainted with the gospel. So Zaccheus received Christ joyfully, because salvation was to come to his house, Luke xix. 6. And the man that found the true treasure, for joy thereof went and sold all that he had, Matth. xiii. 44. You may take in that scripture by way of overplus, Acts ii. 41. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." Wherefore it is said, Heb. iii. 6. "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." The first offers of pardon and life by Jesus Christ stir up this holy rejoicing in us.

2. This is not only the case at our first entry into Christianity, but our progress in the duties of the gospel, and our hopes of it, are carried on with rejoicing. Therefore believers are described by it, Phil. iii. 3. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Therefore the whole life of a Christian is represented by keeping a feast, 1 Cor. v. 7. The Christian is always rejoicing in Christ, if he be in a right frame, and lives up to his gospel-privileges. I instance chiefly in two duties, namely, prayer and praise, or thanksgiving, which take up a deal of our commerce with God.

(1.) Rejoice evermore even in praying. They that delight in God will be often with him, and can come cheerfully, and unboresome themselves to him, as a man would to his friend. They are not dragged into his presence, as criminals into the presence of a judge; but they come freely to him, as children to their father. But this is denied of the hypocrite, Job xxvii.



10. "Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?" Their straits and ease may force them sometimes to do so, but they have no inward delight in the exercise, and therefore they give it up.

(2.) Praise and thanksgiving. That is a fruit of our delight in God, and a means to quicken it. The believer can bless God for his mercies in Christ, when retrenched and cut short in the world. Though he has lost some comforts, yet others still remain. Shall one cross embitter all our comforts? Believers can bless God for taking away as well as giving, as Job did, chap. i. 21. If God gave all, why may he not take a part? have we any cause to complain if he does so?

3. Not only are we to rejoice at the beginning of and progress in the spiritual life, but the ending thereof is carried on by it. The joy of God is our support in our declining time; it is the staff of our age: for then Christians grow more dead to the world and worldly things, and are less moved by them, whether they keep or lose, have or want them; and then they are nearer to eternity, and have more of that joy and rejoicing in hope spoken of Rom. v. 2. This joy is a beginning of the joys of heaven, where joy will be perfected: our delight in God now is of the same nature with that which the saints and angels have in heaven. There is indeed a vast difference in the degrees: here a little joy enters into us, but then and there we enter into our Master's joy, Matth. xxv. 13. Though they differ in degree, yet the object and affection is the same. It is the same God, the same glory which rejoices us; only now they are seen by faith, then they shall be objects of direct sight and fruition. We shall see him face to face. In a word, rejoicing in God is a beginning of the employment we shall then have in heaven. Therefore when we expect in a few days to be swallowed up of this joy, shall we be no more affected with it now? we that shall be so shortly full of joy, shall we be empty now? shall not we rejoice,

who have a title to heaven, and shall in a little time be in the full possession of it?

III. I come now to give you some reasons tending to shew, that we should have a greater inclination to this blessed work than we usually have, and that we should be oftener thus exercised.

1. Because God infinitely good and gracious has done so much to raise it in us. All the persons of the Godhead concur and contribute their influence in that way of operation which is proper to each, to give us grounds of joy and rejoicing.

(1.) The Father gives himself to us, and his favour as our felicity and portion. The love of God is the foundation-cause of all our happiness, which sets all other causes at work; and when we have the sure and blessed effects of it, can any thing be so bitter, but this love of God will sweeten? *Psal. iv. 6. 7.* "There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." Worldly carnal men must have something good to sense; but godly men take their full delight in God. There is enough in him to swallow up all our infelicities, yea, to sweeten the thoughts of death, and a judgement to come.

(2.) The Son of God is also sweet matter of rejoicing to us, as our Redeemer and Saviour. You are frequently, but more especially now upon the back of this solemnity, to consider what the Lord Jesus Christ hath done to deliver you from sin, the bitter curse of the law, the fears of death, and the flames of hell.

The eternal Son of God came to heal our wounds, *Is. liii. 5.* "By his stripes we are healed;" to make our peace with the Father by the blood of his cross, *Col. i. 20.*; to vanquish our spiritual enemies, and triumph over them, *Col. ii. 14. 15.*; to be the ransom



of our souls, 1 Tim. ii. 6.; the Captain of our salvation, Heb. ii. 10.; the Head of his church, Eph. i. 22.; the treasury and storehouse of all our comforts, John i. 16. In short, he hath recovered us to God, and hath given us an interest in the blessings of the gospel, and the promises thereof, which are in him yea and in him amen. And is not this matter of joy and rich comfort? The whole covenant breeds strong consolation in the hearts of God's people, Heb. vi. 18.; and David saith, Psal. cxix. 111. "Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart." It does our hearts good when we view those things. Abraham rejoiced at a distance in the foresight of Christ's day, John viii. 56. And shall not we rejoice that live under the clearest dispensation of it? The benefits of our redemption by Christ should be so esteemed by us, that no affliction should be accounted grievous. The kingdom of God is every where represented as a kingdom of joy and comfort, Rom. xiv. 17.; and if we be real members of it, we will still see cause of rejoicing in Christ Jesus.

(3.) The Holy Ghost concurreth in his way of operation as a Sanctifier, Guide, and Comforter. As a Sanctifier he lays the foundation for comfort; he first pours in the oil of grace, and then the oil of gladness. Comfort and joy follow holiness, as heat does the fire. In his restraining motions, as he mortifies sin, or in his inviting motions, as he excites and quickens to holiness, he prepares the way to spiritual joy. He is given us as a Comforter; purposely given us to keep in this holy fire, and maintain a constant delight in God in our souls; and therefore this joy is called *joy in the Holy Ghost*. Where God himself takes upon him the office of a Comforter, sure there will be comfort. Life quickens, light illuminates, and the comforting Spirit will comfort in that season and degree God sees fit, and we are capable to receive. He com-

Disc. 12. *The Duty of rejoicing in the Lord.* 363

ports partly as sealing, and partly as giving earnest,  
2 Cor. i. 22.

2. All the graces of the Spirit tend to excite this joy, particularly faith, hope, and love.

(1.) Faith, that is a dependence upon God for something future that lieth out of sight. Now, these invisible and future objects are so great and glorious, that they support and comfort the heart, how afflicted soever our present condition may be, 1 Pet. i. 8. "In whom believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Rom. xv. 13. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost."

(2.) Hope breedeth this joy also: Rom. xii. 12. *Rejoicing in hope.* Chap. v. 2. *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Though we be pressed with miseries for the present, yet there is a better estate to come. The excellency and certainty hereof causeth us to rejoice.

(3.) Love to God causes us also to rejoice in him: for it shews itself in a complacency and well-pleasedness of mind in God as our chief good, Psal. xxvi. 5. 6. Certainly they do not love God that do not value and esteem him better than all worldly things. Other things without him cannot give any solid content to the soul: but he without other things is enough. Therefore if we be rooted and grounded in love to God, he will be the delight of our souls, and our exceeding joy, whatever we lose in the world, Hab. iii. 17. 18. forecited.

3. All the ordinances of the gospel and duties of religion were appointed to breed and feed, to act and increase this joy in us. Reading, hearing, praying, meditating, the Lord's supper, all these were appointed to quicken the soul to delight in God, and must all be used to this end. Wherefore were the scriptures written, but to beget in us a comfortable sense of the love of God in Christ? 1 John i. 4. The word begets and keeps up our delight in God, by those discoveries



which it makes of his goodness to us in doctrines, counsels, and promises. Every time we look into God's blessed book, we might have a fresh delight acted and stirred in us. So for hearing, one main end is to increase our joy. The ministry was appointed for this purpose, 2 Cor. i. 24. *Helpers of your joy.* We must press repentance and godly sorrow for sin; but it is to bring you off your vain rejoicings, that ye may rejoice in God. So meditation is calculated to produce joy, Psal. civ. 34. "My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord." So also is prayer, John xvi. 24. "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." The Lord's supper was appointed for the elevation of our joy to the height. It is our spiritual feast and refection, that we may go on our way with joy, as the eunuch did when baptized, Acts viii. 39. Here the whole gospel is applied and sealed to us; and bread and wine do not so much cheer the body, as the body and blood of Christ do the soul. You come here not only to remember your privileges by Christ, but it is your solemn investiture; here you take possession of Christ and all his benefits.

I proceed now to the practical improvement of this subject.

1. From what has been said we may learn, that religion is no melancholy business, as worldlings would represent it, and thereby cast a scandal upon it. They give out, that when men come to be Christians, they must bid adieu to all kind of joy and rejoicing. This is by no means the case. Religion does not exclude all natural joy, but it does especially set up spiritual joy. Indeed it cannot be denied, that religion has its sadnesses with it as well as its joys; but these sadnesses end in joy. There is grief and sadness from the sight of sin; but then there is joy from repentance for sin, and the apprehension of sin pardoned. So far is a good Christian from being debarred from

all manner of joy, that it does most properly of all others belong to him. None have so much cause to rejoice (if they duly consider it) as the children of God, because they only have the truest matter, and ground, and occasion of joy in themselves. What is the ground and matter of true joy? Why, surely it is God pacified and reconciled in Christ. Joy is the fruit of peace, and therefore it is joined with it, Rom. xiv. 17. *Peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* Where there is no peace, there can be no joy; that is, joy which is regular, true, and solid. Which, by the way, serves to discard all wicked and ungodly persons, and to deprive them of this privilege. It is true, they have their jollities and frolics with them; but they come far short of true and sound joy. But the joy of true Christians is rightly founded. As they know in whom they believe, so they know in whom they rejoice. This is their peculiar privilege. Therefore to this purpose they rejoice not only in things which are pleasing to flesh and blood, and agreeable to sense, but even in such things as are opposite and contrary, Rom. v. 1. 2. 3. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, though our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also."

2. We infer, that though the times of conferring this joy are promiscuous, yet there are few of the servants of God but sooner or later, as they pass through this world, have their hearts and spirits enlarged with this joy. The scripture abounds with instances of this nature.

3. Let me now exhort you to this duty. I shall adduce an argument or two to persuade to the practice of it, and then conclude with a few directions. 1<sup>st</sup>, The first argument is drawn from the necessity of it, that you may own God as your God. Delighting in God is a duty of the first table, "Thou shalt



"have no other Gods before me;" i. e. Thou shalt rejoice in no other but in me only, as thy full and all-sufficient portion and happiness. Therefore it is a part not of instituted, but of natural worship; such worship as we are to give God, though he had not given direction about it, which immediately resulteth from the owning and chusing of God for our God. For if he be not loved and delighted in more than any thing or all things else, he is not our God. Is there not then a necessity, if you would worship God as God, that you should rejoice always in him, and delight in him as your happiness, whether the world comes or goes, whether creature comforts and relations continue with or be taken away from you? The Lord must still be the delight of our hearts, and our exceeding joy, Psal. xxxvii. 4.

(2.) The necessity of this duty appears from this. How can you be thankful for and prize those blessings which you have from God by Christ, unless you rejoice in him always, whatever your condition be in the world? Psal. iv. 7. Phil. iii. 8. Heb. x. 34. It is good if you can esteem a naked Christ ground enough of comfort, though you be stript of all things. The heart is not sound with Christ, till we be so taken up with the love and praise of our Redeemer, that we have scarce leisure to observe whether we be rich or poor, or to regard the honours and dishonours of the world.

(3.) How can you profess to follow the conduct of that Holy Spirit, who hath undertaken to be your Comforter, unless your solid delight be in God and heaven? John xvi. 22. Surely this is a necessary work of the Spirit to excite and strengthen joy in the heart; and if you do not delight and rejoice in God, you are not observing the work and conduct of the Spirit.

2dly, Consider the utility and advantage of this rejoicing in the Lord. (1.) It is profitable to wean us from carnal vanities, Carnal delights, when in-

dulged, are the root of evil: Rom. viii. 5. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh." Whereas they that are acquainted with God, and are after the Spirit, do mind the things of the Spirit; will be "glad and rejoice in him," and "remember his love more than wine," Cant. i. 4. (2.) It quickens to the life of holiness, Neh. viii. 10. "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Acts xx. 24. — "That I might finish my course with joy." This then is a profitable joy. (3.) It is honourable to God; to rejoice in him evermore. A chearful servant is a credit to his master, and brings no dishonour upon his character; as a dull and morose one certainly does, by impressing others with a notion that he is severe and rigorous. (4.) It is most pleasing to God, Psal. xxxvii. 4. "Delight thyself in the Lord." Surely that which God calleth for so often and so earnestly, cannot but be pleasing to him, and should be more carefully observed by us Christians.

I shall conclude all with a few directions.

*Direct.* 1. Be prepared and disposed for the performance of this great and necessary duty. The precept belongs to those that are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and are reconciled to God, Psal. xxxiii. 1. "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright." The new song and the old man do not well agree. Well then be prepared. It is easy to rejoice after a natural and worldly manner, but it is not easy to rejoice in the Lord. And therefore,

1. Our state must be altered. For naturally we are children of wrath, condemned by the sentence of the law, and under the curse. And does it become condemned men to rejoice? No; you must take hold of another covenant, of the hope that is set before you; and then you provide matter of joy, yea strong consolation, Heb. vi. 18. By taking sanctuary in the Lord's grace, the heirs of promise have strong conso-



lation; as the eunuch had, of which I have taken notice once and again.

2. Our hearts must be renewed: for every man's relish and complacency is according to the temper and constitution of his soul, Rom. viii. 5. forecited, 1 Cor. ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But those who have a divine nature put in them, cannot satisfy themselves in worldly things or enjoyments, but stretch beyond the line of time, and grasp at *the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*, 1 Pet. i. 4.

3. The life must be altered from looseness and unconcern about salvation and good works, to holiness and the fear of God. A holy life raises the greatest joy, John xv. 10. 11. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Hence, after the churches had rest from the persecution raised after the martyrdom of Stephen, it is said, "they walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost," the latter as the effect of the former. A pious life is a sweet life; of which we have Paul's testimony, 2 Cor. i. 12. "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

*Direct. 2.* Act it continually. (1.) Partly, for that the grounds of rejoicing are everlasting, an eternal God, an unchangeable covenant, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, a kingdom that cannot be shaken, an infinite and eternal weight of glory. Having such stable and permanent grounds of joy, can or dare a believer cease to rejoice in God his Saviour? (2.) Partly because we need to exercise our-

elves thus continually, to enliven our duties, to sweeten our crosses, and to wean us from carnal delights. For otherwise our duties will go off heavily; our crosses will swallow us up with too much sorrow, unless we remember that we are continually to rejoice in the Lord and heavenly things. (3.) Because this delight cannot be maintained in the soul, unless it be continually exercised, and made the daily employment of our life. Herod heard John the Baptist gladly for a time, but he soon gave over this exercise. Do thou, O Christian, rejoice in God every day; let it be the constant object of thy attention and business.

*Direct.* 3. Beware you do not forfeit this joy, or damp it by any wounding sin. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption," Eph. iv. 30. Pray daily with the psalmist, Psal. li. 8. "Make me to hear joy and gladness."

*Direct.* 4. If by sin you have wounded your conscience, and thereby brought mourning upon thyself instead of joy and rejoicing, abide not in that state, but humble thyself before thy offended God, renew faith in the Lord Jesus, with unfeigned sorrow for thy sin, and plead for pardon through his blood, and the healing of thy wounds. Beg of God to restore thee the joy of his salvation, that thy broken heart may be reunited, and thy broken bones restored, and set in joint again, Psal. li. 8. Never rest till thou come again to delight in God, with an hearty resolution never to break with him any more.

For motives to press this duty, consider,

1. There is a possibility of restoring it in some competent measure at least, as may be observed in David after his miscarriage, which will and doth appear by some of his psalms penned after his fall in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah, particularly the 3d and 4th, which were composed after that melancholy fall, and upon occasion of his son Absalom's unnatural rebellion, which was the fruit of that foul transgression. In these two psalms, particularly the 4th, David expres-



ses what great joy and gladness God had put in his heart, more than that arising from the greatest affluence of corn, wine, and oil. So when there is hope in Israel concerning this matter, spiritual joy that was lost, may be restored, and Satan, that wicked and malicious enemy, may be disappointed in his aims and temptations to induce us to despair, and dissuade us from trusting in God in the worst case.

2. God is able, ready, and willing to receive lapsed penitents, that are sensible of their errors, and willing to return to their duty and obedience, Psal. xxxii.

5. "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Is. lvii. 17. 18. "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him: I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners." Your case is really sad and grievous, but not desperate and hopeless. Therefore observe the following means in order to a recovery.

*Mean 1.* Renew your repentance by solemn and serious humiliation of the soul before God. Godly sorrow is the only way to spiritual joy. You may have comfort upon God's terms this way; therefore set seriously and speedily about it.

*Mean 2.* Put your business in the hands of your Redeemer. This Advocate must make your peace for you, 1 John ii. 1. Withal acknowledge the free grace of God in Christ. As Christ must procure our pardon, so also our joy. God is always well pleased with him, and so consequently with all his members in him, and for him. The more then we cleave to Christ, and depend on God's goodness in him, the better it will be for us. Plead with him, that it was his free grace that gave thee joy at first, and beg the same free grace may move him still.

*Mean 3.* Do thy first works. Spiritual joy is recovered in a way contrary to that in which it was lost. Therefore consider what it is whereby thou provokedst God to remove it, and crucify those lusts thou hadst prevailling in thee, and perform those duties more and more vigorously, which before were omitted by thee.

*Mean 4.* Attend upon the ordinances, the word, sacraments, and the communion of saints. These are means to recover, promote, and preserve our joy. God sometimes upon such occasions as these sets in with us. How did the spouse recover Christ's presence? Was it not by her spiritual converse with him? And so shall we all do likewise. Thus by hearing of the word, this often brings joy with it. It brings a word of peace and agreement with it. Hence it is called *the word and ministry of reconciliation*, 2 Cor. v. 19. 20. We bring you glad tidings of great joy, God reconciled in Christ. This is still observable in the ministry; in Peter's ministry towards those who were pricked in heart, Acts ii. 37. in Paul's towards the jailor, Acts xvi. 31. And for this way of doing there is a ministerial gift required, and that one be furnished for speaking to a distressed conscience; and there is a special dexterity requisite for this work. Therefore to this purpose you have that word, Job xxxiii. 14.—24.

“ God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth  
 “ it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when  
 “ deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon  
 “ the bed: then he openeth the ears of men, and seal-  
 “ eth their instruction, that he may withdraw man  
 “ from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He  
 “ keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from  
 “ perishing by the sword. He is chastened also with  
 “ pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones  
 “ with strong pain: so that his life abhorreth bread,  
 “ and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed a-  
 “ way, that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were  
 “ not seen, stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near  
 “ unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If



“ there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one  
 “ among a thousand, to shew unto man his upright-  
 “ nefs: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, De-  
 “ liver him from going down to the pit, I have found  
 “ a ransom.” See here there must be a messenger,  
 an interpreter, one of a thousand for this work, one  
 that has skill and a call for it. It is not *quilibet à vul-*  
*go*, but *unus e millibus*, that is qualified for this em-  
 ployment. Though there be use also of private  
 quickenings, and Christians comforting of one ano-  
 ther; yet the doing of this with that authority and  
 success as may give best satisfaction, is a branch of the  
 public ministry. David prays for this, Psal. li. 8,  
*Make me to hear joy and gladness.* We may conceive the  
 hearing of joy there two manner of ways; first, by  
 the hearing of the ear in the ministry of the word, of  
 which I have spoke a little already; or, secondly, by  
 the hearing of the heart, in the application of the Spi-  
 rit to the conscience. These two must go together to  
 make the business complete. As there is the voice of  
 the Spirit to the soul in direction, *Is. xxx. 21.* so also  
 in consolation, *Thy sins are pardoned. I am thy salvation.*

Thus the holy sacrament, which is a sealing ordi-  
 nance, hath the like effect with it in the conscionable  
 improvement of it. There the King is seen in his beau-  
 ty, and held in the galleries. There they *find him*  
*whom their souls love*, and do rejoice with joy unspeakable,  
*and full of glory, li. lxvi. 10, 11.* “ Rejoicewe with Jeru-  
 “ salem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her: re-  
 “ joice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her;  
 “ that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts  
 “ of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be  
 “ delighted with the abundance of her glory.” And  
 thus, if ye would attain to rejoicing in the Lord, care-  
 fully and sedulously attend gospel-ordinances, which  
 are of divine institution, and which the Lord blesses  
 for begetting, maintaining, and increasing this spiri-  
 tual joy in him, which is so useful and comfortable to  
 the Christian, so honourable to your blessed Master,  
 and so ornamental to a Christian profession,

## DISCOURSE XIII.

The Duty of Believers to bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for all the spiritual Blessings conferred on them in Christ, opened up and applied \*.

EPHESIANS i. 3.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*

**I**T is the high honour and exalted privilege of those encircling the throne above, that they ever adore the Majesty of heaven, and without intermission, in the most elevated strain, sing praises and Hallelujahs to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever, who hath redeemed them to God by his blood, and brought them safely through all difficulties and opposition to Immanuel's land. Therefore we may conclude, that it is not an unbecoming exercise, but a commendable and commanded duty, in those who have the believing view and solid hope of this privilege above, to be thus employed even in their militant state here below, especially when sharing in and tasting of the heavenly viands of the glorious gospel.

We find the apostle Paul upon this account, here and elsewhere, ascribing blessing and praise unto God: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.*

This apostle having been instrumental in converting many among the Ephesians from the idolatrous worship of the fictitious goddess Diana, and bringing

\* This discourse, consisting of several sermons, was delivered at Marytown in 1733, after the sacrament.



them to a solid belief of God in Christ, and the great truths of Christianity, writes this most excellent epistle to them from Rome, where he was now the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles, in order to establish them in the faith, and fortify them against the cunning of seducers and false teachers, and enforce upon them the practice of Christian duties.

In this chapter we have the doctrine of salvation delivered in its principal grounds, causes, means, and ends; more generally in ver. 3. and more particularly in the subsequent verses.

More generally, I say, ver. 3. Here the apostle praiseth God for his grace and love in Christ; so that the text is a doxology, or song of praise to God the Father, for those inestimable blessings that we enjoy in and through Jesus Christ. In which we may notice two things.

1. A description of the object of blessing or praise.
2. The reason of this song of praise to this glorious person.

1. We may notice the object of praise as described in the text; and it is God, whom he holds forth in his relation to Jesus Christ as his God and Father.

Here two questions arise, which require an answer.

*Quest.* 1. In what respect is God Christ's God?

*Ans.* 1. With respect to his humanity, he is his God in respect of predestination and election: *Is.* xlii. 1. "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth." *Psal.* lxxxix. 19. "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; "I have exalted one chosen out of the people." *1 Pet.* i. 20. "Who verily was foreordained before "the foundation of the world."

2. In respect of federal relation; he is his covenanted God, *Is.* xlix. 4. 5. "Then I said, I have laboured in "vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and "in vain, yet surely my judgement is with the "Lord, and my work with my God. And now, saith "the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his

“servant, to bring Jacob again to him; Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.”

3. In respect of divine blessings, which Christ received from God in their fulness, Psal. xlv. 2. 7. 8. “God hath blessed thee for evermore.—God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia; out of the ivory palaces; whereby they have made thee glad.”

4. In respect of divine conduct and presence, whereby he was never forsaken of God, Matth. xxvii. 46.

*Quest. 2.* In what respect is God called the Father of Christ?

*Ans. 1.* In respect of numerical communication of nature, as the second person of the ever-glorious Trinity, 1 Pet. i. 3. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Col. ii. 9. “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”

2. In respect of creation. The man Jesus being begotten by the Holy Ghost, is called *the Son of God*, Luke i. 35.

3. In respect of mediation for sinners. He is elected, called, furnished for, and authorised to this work by God the Father. Upon this head you may consult Psal. xl. John x. Heb. x.

So that this periphrasis, *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, is used to distinguish our God from the God of the Jews, Turks, and Pagans. It is true, the Lord was wont to be known to the Jewish church, by the names of *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*: but now in the Christian church he is celebrated by the name of *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

If you consider Christ in his divine nature, he is God of himself, but not Son of himself; *αυτοθεος*, but not *αυτογιος*. His person is of the Father, but his essence is of himself. For such an High Priest it became us to have as was after the order of Melchisedek, with-



out father or mother. For so was Christ without father as man, and without mother as God. Now, in that he is here said to have a Father, it is to be understood of his divine nature, in respect of which by an eternal generation the person of the Son was begotten of the Father. Great is this mystery, and most difficult to be conceived and understood, and the rather because nothing carnal or earthly is here to be imagined. For the Son of God was not begotten as sons among men are, but after a more admirable and excellent manner. Neither know I how to express the way of conceiving of this generation better than by way of negation, denying unto it whatever hath imperfection.

There is a threefold generation, *per se*, *de se*, and *extra se*, as the schoolmen distinguish. The first is corporeal, called in schools logical and predicamental; and this is of bodily things, which by themselves, and out of themselves, and without themselves do beget.

The second is transcendent and metaphysical, and this is of spirits, and mental. For here the mind, as an uncompounded subject, doth not out of itself, but by itself, and in itself beget, (*non de se, sed per se, in se*), and thus it begets contemplation or reason, thoughts or affections.

The third is supreme and singular, or divine; and that is that generation by which the Father in himself, and by himself, by nature, and not by faculty or power, begets the Son; and this in a word is that which in this place is to be conceived of: so that we must still ascend higher than the generation of bodies or souls; and when we are come to the ocean, that is, beyond and higher than either of these, we must rest and wonder, especially taking heed to our thoughts, as in other things, so especially in this. For we are still to remember, that there is a vast difference between the Father begetting the Son in the Trinity, and earthly fathers begetting their sons in the world.

1. There is no priority in time between the Father

and the Son, as in some sense there is in corporeal generations: for Christ is of the Father, but not after the Father.

2. There is no inequality. The Son is not less than the Father; for Christ is co equal as well as co-eternal with him.

3. Here is no division. The Son is not divided from the Father; for Christ is not only like the Father, *ὁμοιωτός*, but of the same substance with the Father, *ὁμοούσιος*.

By the by observe, that the consideration of this doctrine, that Christ is the Son of God, may serve for diverse uses to us; such as,

*First*, To confirm us in the detestation of the blasphemous wickedness of the Jews, that would not receive the doctrine, that Christ was the Son of God, John v. 18. vi. 42. & viii. 19.

*Secondly*, It may serve to instruct us. And,

1. Here we may see that it is a matter of necessity to be believed; and accordingly we should labour to inform ourselves aright in this doctrine, as being a point that should ever be illustrious in the Christian church, and the rather because of that promise, 1 John iv. 15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

2. We may see from this our dignity. For if it be an honour to Christ to have God for his God and Father, what reason have poor believers to rejoice, considering that whatever they are in this world, yet they have the true God, the great Jehovah, to be their Father also? Hence says Christ, John xx. 17. "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

3. It serves to teach us our duty to God. For by this doctrine we hear that God is the Father of Christ. Now, by other scripture-passages, we may observe how Christ carried himself toward his Father; and from him we may learn how to order our behaviour also.



There are three things with respect to this memorable in Christ. (1.) His obedience; (2.) His patience and humility; and (3.) His willingness to die: all inferred upon this consideration, that God was his Father. For,

(1.) If the Father work, the Son worketh also; yea, whatsoever the Father did, the Son did also, John v. 17. 19. Nay, Christ did not desire to be believed, when he said he was God's Son, further than he proved it by doing the works of his Father.

(2.) For his patience and humility, it was admirable. This Son of God had not where to lay his head. He endured the impious contradiction of sinners against himself. He would not tempt God, by presumptuous trusting upon extraordinary support, when ordinary means were offered, Matth. iv. 3. He was to be consecrated through afflictions, and to learn obedience by what he suffered, Heb. ii. 10. And when he had suits to present to God his Father, he doth in all humility pray and importune: yea, he used strong cries in the days of his flesh, and left his Father to expound the meaning of his prayer, Heb. v. 7. 8. 9.

(3.) As to his willingness to die; in John xiii. 1. he useth that as a reason why he could gladly go out of the world, because it was nothing else but to go to his Father.

In all these things we that are younger brethren should learn how to carry towards God. If we call God Father, we should do the works of our Father; and for patience and humility, we are charged with it by Christ, even to learn of him to be meek and lowly. And it is a great shame for us to make so much ado about our crosses, when we consider the patience of Christ, or to think it strange when our prayers are not heard at the first, or, as we would have it, in the letter of our desires, when we observe herein the carriage of God towards Christ, the Son of his love.

*Thirdly*, This doctrine serves to comfort the Lord's people.

1. Against all the difficulties of sanctification, and against all the power of Satan. For as Christ is the Son of God, so he mightily proves himself to be so by the Spirit of sanctification, shewing his power in throwing down and destroying the works of the devil, Rom. i. 4. 1 John iii. 8.

2. In all their suits to God. For as Christ is our Advocate with the Father; and hath taken upon him to present our prayers to God, so from this doctrine we may be assured of success. We cannot fail of succeeding, when we have the King's Son to present our petitions; and so much the more that Christ desires to shew his greatness with his Father, by obtaining our requests at his hands. For thereby the Father is glorified in the Son; and God loves us so much the better, because we love Christ; and will readily grant all the requests we present through him.

3. In respect of the hope of preferment by his service. We cannot serve a more honourable Lord. If we serve earthly princes, they may neglect us and our services, for we seldom see all the servants of the greatest princes arrive at preferment. But if princes on earth were ever so honourable, that they did purpose to exalt every one of their servants; yet under that hope men may consume all their means, and in the end die beggars, because the prince may die before they obtain their preferment. But it is not so with Christians in the service of Christ: For he is King of kings and Lord of lords, and will never forget any that serve him in truth and sincerity, being faithful and true to all his promises and engagements. Besides, he cannot die, Rev. i. 18. for he hath life in himself. Blessed are they therefore who serve this great King, and trust in his mercy and goodness; for he ever liveth to make intercession for them, and will never intermit his interest in their behalf, till he hath brought them home to himself, that where he is, there they may be also.



So much for the first thing observable in the text, the description of the person to whom praise is ascribed.

2. We have the ground and reason of the doxology: which is God's  *blessing us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ*. Where we may consider two things.

(1.) The object of the blessing, *us*; that is, us mankind sinners as elect souls, gospel-hearing, believing souls, and that of all nations, states, and conditions. This object as in God's decree takes in the first two; and the blessing as actually bestowed takes in the next two without separation.

(2.) The blessing itself, which is described in five articles.

[1.] In the nature of it, *spiritual blessings*: that is, blessings concerning the soul, blessings of a divine nature, wrought by the divine Spirit, and having a divine tendency.

[2.] In the fulness of it, *all spiritual blessings*; that is, all grace, all glory; for it cannot be supposed that any blessing is here left out, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. 12.

[3.] The place from whence it comes, and where it is accomplished, *heavenly places*, or, as some read, *heavenly things*; that is, which come from heaven, fit for it, draw to it, and are fully possessed in it at last.

[4.] In its meritorious cause and subject, *in Christ*: that is, by virtue of his merit, and our relation to him as our federal head, to whom we are joined by the decree, and by a special, spiritual, and gracious union; by actual faith wrought in us by the Spirit.

[5.] In its freeness and certainty, *bath blessed us*; that is, by way of free gift and real possession in the head, who does possess them as such, and we in him either by title or actual enjoyment.

The doctrine arising from the text is,

Doct. The believing, understanding, and exercised Christian will be, and actually is, upon some solemn occa-

*sions, so filled with the sense of God's love in Christ, as, with an enlarged heart and open mouth, to fall out into, and is exercised in the praises of God, and blessing him for his spiritual blessings and favours in Christ.*

I will endeavour, through divine assistance, to handle this doctrine, in the following method.

I. I will unfold the duty which believers are here said to be taken up with, viz. blessing God.

II. Shew for what things they are thus exercised in blessing God,

III. Mention more particularly some of those spiritual blessings for which gracious souls will not fail to bless God.

IV. Subjoin a few reasons why they are and will be thus exercised.

V. Apply.

I. I am to unfold the duty mentioned in the text and doctrine, that of blessing God. And here I would shew,

1. What we are to understand by blessing God.
2. How it is that man does so.

*First*, I shall shew what is meant by blessing.

Blessing is diversely taken in scripture. Sometimes man blesteth man, as Toi king of Hamath sent his son to bless David, 2 Sam. viii. 10. as David did Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 33. and Eli blessed Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 17. Thus in Ruth ii. 4. "Boaz said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you: and they answered him, The Lord bless thee." The haters and persecutors of the church and people of God are denied this, Psal. cxxix. 8. "Neither do they who go by say, The blessing of the Lord be upon you; we bless you in the name of the Lord."

2. God blesteth man, as Psal. lxxvii. 1. *God—bless us.*

3. Sometimes man is said to bless God, as here, and elsewhere, particularly Psal. cxlv. 1. "I will bless thy name." ver. 2, "Every day will I bless thee."



ver. 21. "Let all flesh bless his holy name." Pſal. lxxviii. 19. "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation." Thus David calls upon his soul to the performance of this duty, Pſal. ciii. 1, 2. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

When then it is said here, and elsewhere by the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. i. 3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," we are to know that God bleſſeth us imperatively, and we bless him optatively, when we desire and endeavour to set forth his praise, as Pſal. cxlv. 1. 2. 21. forecited. This is the way to preserve and increase our blessings, of whatever nature or kind they be, temporal or spiritual. He that gives thanks for an old mercy, makes way for a new one. And this is more pleasing to God than all legal sacrifices: Pſal. l. 8. "I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, &c. ver. 14. "Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High." By this we glorify God. The saints in heaven glorify him thus without any opposition in the midst of his friends; but we praise him now with much danger and difficulty in the midst of his enemies. This is the end of our creation, Prov. xi. 4. "The Lord hath made all things for himself." Il. xliii. 21. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." Every member, every sense, every faculty of the soul, and every part of our bodies calls for thankfulness. *Quot membra tot ora.* Had we but wanted a leg, or an arm, or an eye, we should have known the value of that mercy. Yea, it is the end of our predestination, Eph. i. 11. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will; that we should be to the praise of his glory." It is the end of our redemption, Il. li. 11. "I therefore the

“redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with  
 “singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be up-  
 “on their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy;  
 “and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.” Luke  
 i. 74. “That he would grant unto us, that we be-  
 “ing delivered out of the hands of our enemies,  
 “might serve him without fear.” It is the end of  
 our adoption, Eph. i. 5. 6. “Having predestinated  
 “us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to  
 “himself, according to the good pleasure of his will;  
 “to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he  
 “hath made us accepted in the Beloved.” In a  
 word, it is the end of all God’s mercies, that we  
 should praise him for them, Psal. l. 15. “Call upon  
 “me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and  
 “thou shalt glorify me.” *Quot beneficia tot ora.*  
 When the Lord had delivered Israel out of Egypt, he  
 makes it an argument to quicken them to obedience,  
 Exod. xx. 1. 2. 3. “I am the Lord thy God, which  
 “have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out  
 “of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no o-  
 “ther gods before me.”

*Secondly,* How does man bless God?

*Ans.* 1. In his heart, when being refreshed with  
 God’s favours and blessings, and inflamed with the  
 joys of his presence, nourished with the sense and  
 use of his benefits, he lifts up his heart within him to-  
 wards God: Is. xxvi. 9. “With my soul have I de-  
 “sired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within  
 “me will I seek thee early.” Psal. ciii. 1. forecited.  
 Psal. lvii. 7. 8. “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart  
 “is fixed; I will sing and give praise. Awake up,  
 “my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will  
 “awake early.” Thus did Mary, Luke i. 46. 47. 49.  
 “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath  
 “rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he that is might-  
 “y hath done to me great things; and holy is his  
 “name.”

2. With and by his tongue, when he takes to him



words, and opens his lips to confess and praise God, either in secret or openly, privately or publicly: Psal. lxxvi. 1. 2. "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands: sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious." ver. 8. "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard." *Eccl.* And then he adds, ver. 17. "I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue." And then he concludes the psalm, ver. 20. "Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me." Psal. li. 15. "O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise."

3. In his works; and that four ways.

(1.) When he sets up memorials of God's great works and deliverances, as 1 Sam. vii. 12. "Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," Chap. xvii. 37. "David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

(2.) When he receives the sacrament, setting himself apart to celebrate the memory of Christ's death, by which the covenant is confirmed with many, Matth. xxvi. 28. and the fountain of all grace opened. David, when he would render thanks unto God, takes the cup of salvation, Psal. cxvi. 12. and the sacrament is called the eucharist, from giving of thanks; and so the cup is called *the cup of blessing*, 1 Cor. x. 16.

(3.) By the obedience of his life, striving to glorify God in all manner of conversation, 1 Cor. x. 31. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Tit. ii. 11. 12. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

(4.) By shewing mercy, and thereby causing the hearts and lives of others to bless God and themselves both, according to the example of Job, chap. xxix. 11. 12. 13. "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

II. I come now to shew for what things they are thus exercised in blessing God.

In general, for all things, according to that gospel-precept, 1 Thess. v. 18. *In and for every thing give thanks.* So Psal. ciii. 1. 2. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." There are natural, civil, and spiritual benefits; and gracious souls bless God for them; but especially they bless him for spiritual benefits. Thus a spiritual man, a renewed soul, when he observes spiritual blessings bestowed on himself or others, it makes him both joyful and thankful at once. Of which the following scripture-passages are instances, which it will be worth your while to peruse, Rom. i. 8. & Cor. i. 4. Rom. vi. 17. Luke i. 46. Psal. xxii. 22.

Now a blessing may be said to be spiritual in two respects.

1. In regard of its nature, when it is a thing which is wrought, not by any power of nature, or by means natural, but by virtue of God's Spirit, and by means supernatural, such as the word of God is.

2. Things are in some sort spiritual, when though, for their essence and being, they exceed not nature, yet are directed by a supernatural providence, to work unto an end above nature, even to bring us unto happiness with God. Thus God gives his chosen ones many blessings spiritual for nature, and so guides all things, health, sickness, wealth, and poverty, that they work together for a spiritual and supernatural end, even the



salvation of all those who are his. O what a numerous train of blessings does attend them thus! for which they are called to bless God, as for temporal, Psal. cvii. 8. so much more for spiritual blessings, which are not sparingly bestowed, but fully and with an open hand, even all blessings, *all spiritual blessings*, saith the apostle here, and also Peter, 2 epist. i. 3. as if all, none being excepted, were already enjoyed: Spiritual blessings, viz. those of them which are absolutely necessary to salvation and eternal blessedness; all of which are linked together, and cannot be separated. When God bestoweth one of these, he bestoweth all, there being a necessary concatenation among them all, Rom. viii. 29. 30. so that they either co-exist, or at least, in God's good time, do follow one upon another, Phil. i. 6. And though there be some spiritual blessings which cannot be fully attained unto here while upon earth, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. such as perfection in holiness, and the full enjoying of God in glory; yet the believer is as fully assured of his full enjoying of them, as if he were already possessed of them, and that on account of his undoubted right to those blessings (1 Cor. iii. 21. 23.), and God's unchangeable purpose to bestow them, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. and because of the first fruits and earnest of those blessings already bestowed upon the believer, as in ver. 14. of this chapter, and of Christ's having taken possession of those in the believer's name, as in Eph. ii. 6. And for these, and all of these, the apostle blesses God.

III. I therefore proceed to enumerate more particularly some of those spiritual blessings for which the knowing exercised soul will not fail to bless God. And these are blessings either before time or in time bestowed on us.

1. The flower of thanksgiving is, when we can and do bless God for Christ, saying with the apostle, 2 Cor. ix. ult. *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift*; and with the heavenly society, Rev. iv. 11. "Thou

“ art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour,  
 “ and power; for thou hast created all things, and for  
 “ thy pleasure they are and were created.” John iii.  
 16. “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only-  
 “ begotten Son,” &c. “ Christ is made of God unto  
 “ us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification,  
 “ and redemption.” The apostolical form insists on  
 this in the text, and in 2 Pet. i. 3.

1. As we are to bless God for Jesus Christ, so we  
 are also to bless him for our election in him, that “ God  
 “ hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of  
 “ the world, that we should be holy and without blame  
 “ before him in love,” Eph. i. 4. Christ is the first  
 begotten among many brethren, that in all things he  
 might have the pre-eminence; and he was sealed and  
 set apart to be the Prince of our salvation before our  
 election in him. We cannot now stay to unfold the  
 doctrine of election: but surely to the truly-pious it is  
 a blessing worthy of all thankfulness, that he hath cho-  
 sen us and loved us in Christ himself before the founda-  
 tion of the world; and that for his own name’s sake,  
 for we were loathsome and unworthy, Ezek. xvi. 6.  
*polluted in our blood*; and “ therefore the Lord did not  
 “ set his love upon us, nor chuse us, because we were  
 “ more in number than any people,” as Moses says to  
 the Israelites, “ but because the Lord loved us,” Deut.  
 vii. 7, 8. By the by, let me exhort you, with the apo-  
 stle, to “ give all diligence to make your calling and  
 “ election sure.”

This is an ancient blessing, not of yesterday, but be-  
 fore all worlds. His love was set upon his people from  
 everlasting, electing them to salvation, to the praise of  
 his glory, 2 Tim. i. 9. “ Who hath saved us, and call-  
 “ ed us with an holy calling, not according to our  
 “ works, but according to his own purpose and grace,  
 “ which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world  
 “ began.”

3. Our predestination is ground of blessing God;  
 that he hath not only chosen us to salvation, but or-



dained effectual means, which shall most infallibly bring us to the end for which we are chosen. God hath fixed and appointed an order of means which shall bring his people to glory. When God is pleased to appoint a person to live forty, fifty, or more years, his providence does so work, that every thing from that person's first breath to his last breath does forward him to the blessed period pre-ordained: all things do after a sort conspire and work to the accomplishing of that end. Every wind, even the most cross, helps to waft the person to the haven of true happiness, his intended port.

4. We are to bless God for our adoption in time, that we are made the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Those whom God predestineth, he ordaineth that they shall be conformed to the image of his Son, Rom. viii. 29. *viz.* in holiness and glory, according to their measure and capacity. For this reason they are called *the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven*, Heb. xii. 23. *To them that received him, gave he power to be the sons of God*, John i. 12. *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* 1 John iii. 1. They are sons through and by their mystical union with Christ.

See then what love the Father did bear to thee, O believing sinner, that thou shouldst be made a son. O admire this love, and bless his name for it. When David was told of matching with Saul's daughter, he said, "Seemeth it a light thing unto you to be son-in-law to a king?" And shall it seem a light matter to us, that according as we are predestinated, we are adopted heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ of the kingdom of glory?

5. In a word, we are to bless God for all spiritual blessings, both positive, that is, such as confer some good upon us; and privative, such as keep evil from us.

God's positive spiritual blessings are either in-

ward or outward. The inward are all illuminations, inspirations, gifts of the Spirit, moving, increasing, and confirming of grace once received. The outward are the word and sacraments, occasions outwardly moving us to good; all the gifts of grace in others, by which we are edified: they are spiritual blessings to us when they profit us, and not theirs only by whom they are received. In a word, every thing which is made to further our salvation, is in this respect a spiritual outward blessing to us.

Now the privative blessings are such as these, the keeping back temptations, and not letting them come in such strength as entirely to overpower us, in putting them by, and defeating the effect which otherwise they would have. They are very precious, and ought to be highly prized by all the children of grace.

6. There are blessings to be revealed in the last time, which respect both the soul and the body; for that shall be made spiritual. They are such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. And though we have them not in possession, yet they are ours; we are blessed with them, though we are not yet possessed of them, like young heirs, who have right to their lands, even in their minority, though they do not enter to the actual possession of them till they arrive at majority. On this account I read that Mr Andrew Gray minister at Glasgow is said to have cried out, "O when will the one and twentieth year of my age come, when I shall enter into the joy of my Lord, and the full possession of these sublime and soul-ravishing blessings!"

Having thus given you some taste of the bountifulness of our gracious God toward us, in a detail of some of the blessings which he confers upon his people in Christ, and for which they are called to bless him; in order to enforce this sweet exercise upon you, I proceed,

#### IV, To assign some reasons why all the children of



grace will be exercised in blessing God for his blessings, especially those of a spiritual nature.

1. Because they are discriminating, and proceed from God's special love, which flows forth to his own people only. Corn, wine, and oil are bestowed upon the world, but faith and love upon his saints. David prayeth, Psal. cvi. 4. "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people." To have the favourite's mercy, is more than to have a common mercy. Protection is the benefit of every common subject, but intimate love and near admission are the privilege of special favourites. Christ gave his purse to Judas, the worst of the disciples; but his Spirit to the rest, as his choicest gift. As the king who gave a kiss to one of his courtiers, and a cup of gold to another, said, "The kiss is much better than the cup of gold, as it is a more affectionate token of my love."

2. Because spiritual blessings concern the better part, the inward man: 2 Cor. iv. 6. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." The body is more than raiment, and the soul is more than the body. The soul furnished with grace excels the soul furnished only with natural gifts and endowments. Thus Paul says, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. 2. 3. "Though I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." A man is nothing without saving grace.

3. Because these blessings are brought about with more ado than temporal favours. God, as Creator and Upholder of all his creatures, bestows temporal blessings

upon the ungodly world, even upon the Heathen that know him not, and that never heard of Christ; but saving grace he bestoweth only as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has purchased these blessings by his death and bloody sufferings, before we could obtain them. Other blessings run in the channel of common providence, but these in the channel of Christ's mediation.

4. Because these are pledges of eternal blessings, and the beginnings of our eternal well-being. The life that is begun in us by the Spirit, is perfected in heaven, John v. 24. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." It is a spark that shall not be quenched, and the food that feeds it, is the meat that perishes not, but endureth to everlasting life, John vi. 27. Graces and eternal blessedness are so linked together, that they cannot be separated. See that blessed chain of salvation, Rom. viii. 30. "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Sanctification is included in the last word. He glorifies his people here in the beginnings of sanctification, and hereafter in the full possession of eternal glory: 2 Cor. iii. 18. "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Sanctification loseth itself in the ocean of eternal glory and happiness.

5. Because these spiritual blessings incline and dispose the heart for praise and thankfulness to God. There is an occasion to praise God, and a disposition of heart to praise him. Outward benefits give us the occasion to praise the Lord, but spiritual benefits give not only the occasion, but the disposition. Other benefits are the motives, but these the preparations, as they fit and incline the heart to this exercise. The



work of faith and love sets the lips wide open to magnify and praise the Lord. Grace is the matter of God's praises, and gives also a ready will to praise him, Psal. lxiii. 5. "My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." When believers feel the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, they are inclined to praise God.

6. Temporal benefits may be given in anger, but the graces of the Spirit are never given so. God may give worldly honour and riches in judgement, and indulge large pastures to beasts fatted for destruction: but he giveth not faith and love in anger, nor a renewed heart so, but as a token of his special love; Matth. xiii. 11. "It is given unto you," says Christ, "to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Phil. i. 19. "I know," says Paul, "that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

7. These blessings render us acceptable to God. A man is not accepted with God for his worldly blessings. He is indeed the more accountable unto God, but not of greater account with him, Luke xii. 48. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." The more helps and encouragements the Lord giveth unto any, the more work and service he expects: but they are not the more precious in his sight for the sake of temporal things. Under the law the rich and the poor paid the same ransom. The rich is not accepted for his riches, nor the poor man despised for his poverty. But the saving graces of the Spirit are acceptable with God. It is said, 1 Pet. iii. 4. that "a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price." God esteemeth this more than outward advantages; and therefore it should heighten the esteem of grace in our hearts, and quicken us more to get and increase it.

8. *Lastly*, Those blessings should be acknowledged;

that God may have the sole glory of them; for he is the Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh down, Jam. i. 17. To prevent spiritual pride, we must be sure to bless God for spiritual blessings. Our crowns must be cast at the feet of the Lamb; for he only is worthy to receive honour, and blessing, and glory, and power. Whatever we do, it is from him who worketh all our works in us, If. xxvi. 12. "All things come of thee," says David, "and of thy own have we given thee," 1 Chron. xxix. 14. "By his grace we are what we are," 1 Cor. xv. 10. Luke xix. 16. "Thy pound hath gained ten pounds."

I proceed now to the application of this doctrine, which I shall discuss in an use of exhortation, and conclude with a few directions as to the proper manner of performing the duty to be exhorted unto.

1. See that you be in a capacity to bless God for spiritual blessings.

1<sup>st</sup>, See that ye have these mercies, and then bless God for them. It would grieve a man, and even make him tremble, to hear light and vain persons take up a form of thanksgiving which is no way proper to them; such as to bless God for their election before time, their sanctification in time, and their hopes of glory after all time. As if a leper, continuing under his loathsome disease, should give thanks for perfect health, so these persons give thanks for grace which they never felt. What is this but to mock God, while we pretend to adore him?

It is true there are spiritual mercies, for which all are bound to bless God; such as the mystery of redemption, the new covenant, the offers and invitations of grace, means and time to repent. These you should value more, and bless God for them. But for men who have no sense of their great sins and necessities, or of the greatness and importance of spiritual blessings, but slight the chiefest mercies, and ac-



count attendance on the means of grace a piece of slavery and an intolerable burden, to pretend to thank God for spiritual benefits, is solemn mockery and detestable hypocrisy. Such persons may feelingly thank God for a gluttonous meal, or unjust gain, or some vain pleasure; but they have no disposition to thank God for the means of grace.

The cream and choice part of thanksgiving is, when we can bless God for Christ, for his Spirit, for heaven, for faith and love. And therefore we should labour with the utmost assiduity to be possessed of these invaluable blessings; and from felt possession of them to bless God, is a pretty good evidence of sincerity in religion.

2. See that you be most affected with those mercies and blessings. Other mercies may be overvalued, especially if we look upon them under the notion of provision for the flesh. In this case our very thankfulness will be a snare. Men will thank God for their preferment, more than for the offer of Christ, and pardon, and life by him. Our esteem may be known by this, What it is that moves us to thankfulness. If it be for the world as used for the pleasures of the flesh, rather than for the service of God, it is but lust disguised in a religious form. Therefore what are you most affectionately thankful for, worldly or spiritual good things? God is to be thanked for all, for temporal blessings, but chiefly for spiritual mercies. Now what endeareth God to your hearts; is it, that he is good to you in Christ, or that he blesteth your outward estate? You should not lessen temporal favours, but look for a better and more distinguishing expression of his love.

3. Be concerned not only to have and prize those spiritual blessings, but particularly to exalt and bless God for blessings conferred upon yourselves or others.

(1.) For mercies conferred upon ourselves, such as knowing the Lord in a saving manner, pardon of sin,

deliverance from the curse of the law and spiritual death, tasting that the Lord is gracious, &c.

(2.) For blessings vouchsafed to others. Wherever God's kindness shineth forth, it must be thankfully acknowledged. Thus did the apostle, Rom. i. 8. "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." When Christ's kingdom prospers extensively or intensively, by the addition of its subjects, or the increase of grace in its members; if we love our Master, we must be glad, when his subjects are multiplied, and his grace abounds among them, and our joy must be expressed in praises on this account. When Paul was converted, he says, Gal. i. 24. *They [the saints] glorified God in me:* that is, they praised God in his behalf, and gave him the honour of that great work, that so useful an instrument was gained to the faith. And the same apostle blessed God for the success of the gospel at Colosse, Col. i. 3. 4. "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you; since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints."

Let us then bless God for the benefits conferred on others. The angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, Luke xv. 10. and much more should we. And this should never be omitted; for instance, (1.) When there is some eminent work accomplished in the church, respecting either the multitude of objects that embrace the gospel, or the degrees of grace conferred upon them. Thus when Cornelius was gained to the faith, as the first fruits of the Gentiles, it is said that the Jewish believers "glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life," Acts xi. 18. And the same observation is made upon the success of the gospel at Antioch, ver. 21. 23. (2.) When there are special circumstances attending the work of grace, such as, that we have been instrumental in doing good to o-



thers, and God hath blessed our word, conversation, or example to them. In this case praise is due to the God of all grace. Of this you have instances in 1 Thess. ii. 9. 10. 1 Cor. i. 4. 5. Rom. i. 12. If we have prayed for any blessing for others, the blessing when granted must be thankfully acknowledged. This is the practice of the saints, as you will find in 2 Cor. i. 11. 3 John 4. Col. i. 3. 4. Phil. i. 3. 6.

I come now to direct you as to the manner of performing this exercise; and shall conclude with a few motives enforcing the duty, of blessing God for spiritual mercies.

1. Bless God cordially, not in a cursory or customary manner, or in a mere verbal or formal way, but from the heart. As God blesteth us really, so our praise to him must be real. God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit. Hence David calls upon his soul to praise God, Psal. ciii. 1. "Bless the Lord, O my soul." And the virgin Mary praised him not only with her soul, but with her spirit, that is, with her understanding, which, when renewed, is the most noble, sublime, and choice part of man, Luke i. 46. 47. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." The spirit is more than the soul. Hence some by soul would have the inferior part of the soul to be meant, as the sensitive powers common to us with brutes, which respects natural things; and by the spirit the superior faculty of the soul, the rational part, (especially when enlightened and renewed by the Spirit of God), which respects divine and spiritual things. So the apostle distinguishes between soul and spirit, 1 Thess. v. 23. \*

2. It must be done zealously and transcendently, with the highest intention of affection. As God is the most high, so our praise must be in some measure answerable. We must exalt and extol his name, Psal.

\* The author here adds, "See Wilson's Christian Dictionary in 4<sup>th</sup> p. Spirit, and Ravanch." *See Wilson's Christian Dictionary in 4<sup>th</sup> p. Spirit, and Ravanch.*

xxv. 1. "O Lord, thou art my God, I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name." We must praise him as the angels do in heaven; though this cannot be done in equality, yet it must be attempted in conformity and similitude. Hence the saints call up all the powers of their souls to this work, as in Exod. xv. And says the psalmist, Psal. lxxix. 30. "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving." See how Deborah rouses up herself, that she may quicken others to this exercise, Judg. v.

12. "*Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song.*" The reiteration of the words shews her earnest affection to the work.

13. We must praise God speedily, without delay. As soon as we receive a mercy, we should give thanks. So did Deborah, Judg. v. 1. The very day she received a victory, she opened her mouth in praises to God. We may begin too late, but never can begin too soon. As God loads us daily with his benefits, so we should daily praise him, Psal. lxxviii. 19. 20.

14. We must do it voluntarily, freely, and cheerfully. All God's people are volunteers, Psal. cx. 3. It is not service that is not voluntary. Compulsive praise is not praise. It is for beasts to be driven against their wills. *Aguntur, non agunt.* As in alms God loves a cheerful giver, so he requires cheerfulness in thanksgiving. God would have our praises flow as water from a spring freely, not as fire from a flint with much hammering and striking.

15. We must praise God believingly and in faith. As our prayers must be thus, so our praises must be offered in the name of Christ. He must sweeten our odours with his incense, Rev. viii. 3. He is the golden altar which sanctifies all our services, Col. iii. 17. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Eph. v. 20. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God, and the Father, in



"the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are to give thanks to God,

(1.) Habitually. Our hearts should be kept in such a holy frame, that on all occasions we may be ready to bless God.

(2.) For all things that God shall allot for us or ours, for prosperity and adversity, for sickness and health, for poverty and plenty. Whatever God do with us, we must praise him for it.

(3.) In the name of Jesus Christ. These calves of our lips must be offered on this altar, Hof. xiv. 2.

6. We must bless God humbly. None can give thanks rightly, but he that does so reverently, Heb. xii. 28. Our rejoicing must be mixed with trembling, Psal. ii. 10. Make a man first humble, and he will soon be thankful; as we see in Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. "I am not worthy," says he, "of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant:" and in the prodigal, Luke xv. 19. "I am no more worthy," says he, "to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." He accounts it an honour to be reckoned among the hired servants. Such a man looks upon all he gets as mercy, disclaiming all pretensions to merit. Hence when the Lord would make men truly thankful, he sets before them their misery in Ezek. xvi.; and he commanded the people of Israel to keep the feast of booths in remembrance of their misery in Egypt, Neh. viii. 17. and to remember that their father Jacob was a poor perishing Syrian, Deut. xxvi. 5. They must acknowledge the meanness of their original, that they might the better magnify God's goodness and free grace in raising them.

7. We must bless God holily, from a pure heart. Praise is unseemly in the mouth of sinners; their sacrifices are an abomination to the Lord. It is in Zion, and not in Babylon, that praise waits for him, Psal. lxxv. 1. It is only saints that are called to this work, Psal. xxxiii. 1. "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous,

"for praise is comely for the upright." Psal. cxlv. 10. "Thy saints shall bless thee." They are favoured with special mercies, as justification, adoption, sanctification, &c. and therefore they ought to be much concerned to be thankful.

8. *Lastly*, We must bless God considerately. We must weigh and ponder all circumstances, as spices when pounded smell more sweetly. Hence David descended to particulars, Psal. cxxxvi. throughout; and so ought we to do.

Let me press this duty upon you with a few motives, and so conclude.

1. Consider the freeness of God's mercies and blessings. When thou wast dead in trespasses and sins, and hadst no eye to pity thee, nor loveliness in thee to attract regard, then God spread his skirt of love over thee, and said unto thee, Live.

2. Consider the fulness of God's mercies and blessings; they are innumerable, blessings to our souls and bodies, on our estate, in the church, in the commonwealth, &c. Meditation on these things will be like oil to the lamp; it will inflame and enlarge our hearts; it will sweeten mercies to us, Psal. civ. 33. 34. and strengthen us in God's way, Neh. viii. 10. Since this duty is so highly pleasing to God, be much in it. The repetition of the act will intend the habit; therefore be practising it on all occasions. Hast thou children? give God thanks for them, as Leah did, Gen. xxix. 35. Hast thou victory over thy enemies? give thanks for that, as David did, 2 Sam. xxii. 1. Hast thou good success? give thanks for that, as Abraham's servant did, Gen. xxiv. 48. In short, whatever mercy you possess, bless God for it.

3. Consider how thankful others are for less than what we enjoy. There are many that would be glad of our leavings. But usually those that have the greatest possessions, pay the least rent; and God receiveth more praise from a poor cottage, than from a rich palace.



5. Consider that God hath blessed us, and doth bless us, and therefore we ought to bless him. He hath blessed us in the creatures, blessed the work of our hands, blessed the fruit of our loins, blessed us by his angels, blessed us by his ministers, blessed us in the fruits of the earth, blessed us in his dear Son, as in the text, blessed us by the blessings of the gospel, blessed us in his house, and blessed us in our own houses; blessed us in our sabbaths and sacraments, in the word, prayer, and praise; he hath blessed us in our bodies and souls, estates and names, &c. and shall we not bless him? Therefore I conclude with two passages of scripture, Psal. lxxvii. 3. "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee." Eph. iii. 20. 21. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,—unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

## DISCOURSE XIV.

The Delight which God hath in his People  
illustrated \*.

PSALM cxlvii. ii.

*The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those  
that hope in his mercy.*

THE complacency and delight which our gracious God takes in his people, as it is surpassingly great, so he is very desirous, they should be persuaded of it, for their happiness, joy, and comfort. Therefore the Holy Ghost is at pains to hold it forth to them, and to inculcate it upon them in the most affectionate terms. This he does frequently through the sacred scriptures, and particularly in the passage now read. Surely then it nearly concerns us to view this ravishing privilege, and to consider who they are whom the Lord, merciful and gracious, delighteth thus to honour, and crown with triumphant victory over their enemies. We are told in the context, that it is not the strength of armies, but the strength of grace, which God is pleased thus to own: *He delighteth not in the strength of the horse, he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man*, ver. 10. Neither cavalry nor infantry are at all agreeable to the Most High; but may be on the side of those the Lord may disown. Whom then does Jehovah take pleasure in? The text tells us, *he taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy*. In which words we have,

1. A description of the people of God: They are such as *fear him, and hope in his mercy*.

2. The privilege of these persons; God takes plea-

\* This discourse was delivered at Marytown, about the year 1730.



sure in them. Whoever be displeased with them, or however they be dissatisfied with themselves, God takes pleasure in them. He accepts their persons and services, and will shew himself to be their God. However hopeless their case may be, their hopes shall not be frustrated, but crowned with enjoyment.

The doctrine is much the same with the words; and the nearer we draw water to the fountain, we conceive it to be the sweeter.

*Doctr. The Lord graciously condescends to take pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*

In handling this doctrine, I shall,

I. Premise a few things for clearing the text and doctrine.

II. Speak a little to the description here given of gracious souls.

III. Prove the doctrine, That the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

IV. Shew what kind of delight it is that God taketh in persons of that character.

V. Point out what it is in them that God takes pleasure in.

VI. Assign a few reasons of the doctrine.

VII. Lastly, Apply the subject.

I. I am to premise a few things for clearing the text and doctrine.

1. A holy fear of and hope in God not only may consist, but must concur in the same heart, at the same time. There must be a reverence of his glorious majesty, and a complacency in his goodness; a becoming dread of his wrath, and a believing expectation of his favour. Not that we must hang in suspense between hope and fear, but must act under the gracious influence of hope and fear. Our fear must save our hope from swelling into pride and presumption; and our

hope must save our fear from sinking into despair.

2. We must hope in God's mercy, especially as manifested in Christ. His general mercy is the object of our hope, even when we cannot find a particular promise to stay ourselves upon. But this general mercy is not that intended in the text. An humble confidence in the goodness and mercy of God as displayed in the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and apprehended by faith, is that which turns to the glory of his mercy, which is his darling attribute, and which he glories in: Psal. xxxiii. 18. "Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him: upon them that hope in his mercy."

II. I proceed to speak a little to the description here given of gracious souls. And they are such as fear God and hope in his mercy. I shall consider each branch of their character separately.

1. The first branch is fear; which may be thus defined: A gracious affection wrought in God's people, by his Holy Spirit, whereby, in the firm belief of the being of God and his attributes, as manifested in the Son of his love, the mercy of mercies, and from a reverential awe of his tremendous majesty, they are influenced to dread and please him, doing all the duties he has prescribed them, and not omitting any thing required in his holy word. This is that filial or child-like fear of God which is peculiar to his own people. And that it is a grace, I prove from Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

For the grounds of this holy affection, consider the following scriptures. Heb. xi. 6. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Hos. iii. 5. "Afterward shall the children of Israel return



"and seek the Lord their God, and David their king;  
 "and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter  
 "days." In a word, it acts upon the full persuasion  
 of all the divine attributes and perfections: such as,—  
 His power, Matth. x. 28. "Fear not them which kill the  
 "body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear  
 "him which is able to destroy both soul and body in  
 "hell."—Upon his justice and holiness, Rev. xv. 4.  
 "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy  
 "name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall  
 "come and worship before thee, for thy judgements  
 "are made manifest."—Upon his goodness, Hos. iii. 5;  
 just quoted. It is not unbecoming a son to reverence a fa-  
 ther as well for his justice as other commendable quali-  
 ties, Psal. cxix. 9. 10. Thereby men are induced to ob-  
 serve all commanded duties, and avoid every thing  
 that may displease God.—This is also clear from Prov.  
 xvi. 6. "By the fear of the Lord, men depart from  
 "evil." Thus Nehemiah saith, chap. v. 15. "The  
 "former governors that had been before me were  
 "chargeable unto the people, and had taken of  
 "them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver;  
 "yea, even their servants bare rule over the people;  
 "but so did not I, because of the fear of God." Psal.  
 xxxiv. 11. "Come, ye children, hearken unto  
 "me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord;" that  
 is, the use of all gospel means, that you may approve  
 yourselves to God, and be accepted of him. It is  
 true indeed what the apostle James says, chap. iii. 2.  
 "In many things we offend all;" and what the a-  
 postle Paul says, Rom. iii. 23. "All have sinned, and  
 "come short of the glory of God:" Yet where this  
 filial fear is predominant in the heart, it notably stirs up  
 a Christian to duty. Hence says the apostle, 2 Cor.  
 vii. 1. "Having these promises, dearly beloved, let  
 "us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh  
 "and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."  
 2. The next thing the Christian is described by, is  
 his hope in God's mercy. Hope is that supernatural

grace wrought by the Spirit in the hearts of God's people, whereby they expect (through his mercy and the merits of his Son) all those precious good things and rich blessings that have been purchased for them by Christ, and made over to them in the covenant of promise, not on the account of their own worth, but on the account of God's mercy in Christ: Jude 21. "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." 2 Theff. ii. 16. "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace," &c. Psal. cxxx. 5. "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope." This hope is called, 1 Pet. i. 3. *a lively hope*: and justly so; for it quickens always according to the measure thereof, it not being alike in all the people of God at all times. It is represented in scripture as a purifying hope, 1 John iii. 3. "Every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." It not only supports the soul amidst all troubles, but makes it overflow with joy: "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

III. The next head is, to prove that the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

This is abundantly clear in the text; yet it may not be improper to adduce a few more scripture passages for the further illustration of it; such as Psal. cxlix. 4. "The Lord taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation." Psal. xi. 7. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright." Prov. xi. 20. "Such as are upright in their way, are his delight." But the truth of the doctrine will further appear from the following particulars.

1. From those affectionate and endearing names he is pleased to give his people above all others; such as



his sister and spouse, Cant. iv. 12. his bride, Rev. xxi. 19. and many other endearing epithets, which I cannot now insist upon.

2. From the tender care he has of them and their concerns: Zech. ii. 8. "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye." He prizeth them above all the potentates of the earth, Psal. cv. 14. 15. "He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sake: saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." Is. xliii. 14. "Thus saith the Lord your Redeemer, the holy One of Israel, For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships." How did he plague those known enemies of his people, the Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, &c. for the injuries they did to them? In all these and many other instances he discovered his kind care of them, and consequently his taking pleasure in them.

3. He exercises a special providence about them in troubles and difficulties. (1.) Many times he prevents them, as we see in David's case, 1 Sam. xxv. at the close. (2.) When he permits troubles to come on them, he sympathizes with them, his bowels of mercy are opened to them, Psal. ciii. 13. "As a father pitieth his children; so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." (3.) He sets bounds and limits to their troubles; saying to their dangers, fears, and trials, Hitherto shall ye come, and no further. 1 Cor. x. 13. "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (4.) He supports them under their troubles; witness the experience of Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 17. "Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known," &c. He makes all their trials and distresses work to

gether for their good and advantage, Rom. viii. 28. and in the end gives them a complete deliverance. Hence says Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 18. "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom."

4. This appears from the many full and free promises he has made them, exceeding great and precious promises; promises relating to life and godliness; promises respecting the present life, and a happy and glorious immortality in the world to come.

5. If the Lord did not take pleasure in his people, would he bestow upon them such rich and invaluable blessings as he does? blessings both in hand and in hope; blessings many in number, and rich above conception? How great a happiness is it to the believer to have *the favour of God, which is better than life*? Psal. lxxiii. 3. Now, life is the best of all natural things: "Skin for skin," said Satan to the Lord, "yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life," Job ii. 4. But the loving kindness of God is better than life; and that in many respects; particularly in that it lasts beyond life, and extends itself to men when they are dead, and lie in their graves. There is a kindness in God to their souls, in keeping them in his own hand, and drawing them so much nearer to himself; and a kindness to their bodies, which having been once the temples of the Holy Ghost, are still preserved by him, and laid up and reserved to the time of a glorious resurrection. There is a kindness to their posterity, which partake of blessings afterwards for their sake. And there is a kindness to their good names, which flourish by a blessed memorial after their departure. Thus does God's favour and loving-kindness outlive even life itself. Is it not then a high favour vouchsafed to the believer to be thus highly privileged?

6. God reveals his will and communicates his secrets to them, Psal. xxv. 14. He discloses to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, Matth. xiii. 35. He



gives them an interest in himself, and a foretaste of the glory that shall be revealed, John xiv. 21. He discovers to them the secrets of his providence, as he did to Abraham, Gen. xviii. 17. With respect to their duty, he is ready to forget and forgive their failings: Psal. cxxx. 3. 4. "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities: O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee: that thou mayst be feared." He accepts of their sincerity, if there be a willing mind, 2 Cor. viii. 12. We are able to do but little service for God; yet he is pleased to reward us amply. The man that had but two talents, and improved them, Matth. xxv. 23, received God's approbation of his diligence. He is ready to help them in their duty, 1 Chron. xv. 26. "God helped the Levites that carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord." Hence Paul says, Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

7. *Lastly*, He will withhold no good thing from them that he sees meet for them, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. so great is his mercy to them that fear him, Psal. ciii. 11. And besides what he gives them in this life, he has reserved more for them in the life to come, Psal. xxxi. 19. "O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!" 1 Cor. ii. 9. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Heb. iv. 9. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." They will then be freed from sin, in its guilt, pollution, and defilement; from the temptations of Satan, whether forcible or fraudulent; from the cares of the world, its frowns and flatteries; and from all the effects of sin, as sorrow and misery, Rev. xxi. 4. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." They shall then be made

perfectly holy, and transformed into the divine image,  
1 John iii. 2. Psal. xvii. ult.

IV. Our next head is to shew what kind of delight and pleasure the Lord condescends to take in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

1. Negatively, We must not think there can be any addition to that infinite complacency which God has in himself, and in his own glorious perfections, from any of his creatures. No. But,

2. It is altogether free and gratuitous to us. Men take pleasure in one another, upon account of some excellency of the object, or some suitableness betwixt the person delighting and the person delighted in, or for some favour received. But no such thing takes place here. It must either be undeserved, or it cannot be at all; for there can be no reason for God's taking pleasure in us, but his own good pleasure; he loves us because he loves us, Deut. vii. 7. 8.

3. This pleasure which God takes in his people, is originated in himself, and is the mere product of free grace. We account it a great piece of favour, especially in great persons, to own worth where they find it. But for them to delight in any person of their own accord, and purely from the goodness of their own nature, without any thing worthy or engaging in the person, is a very great favour; and exactly tallies with the case under consideration. God's people have nothing and can do nothing to move and influence him to take pleasure in them. "We love him, because he first loved us."

4. This delight and pleasure which the Lord takes in his servants, is permanent and durable. The pleasure men take in one another is very variable, and full of changes. They may delight in one to day, and disrelish him to-morrow. But the delight and pleasure which God taketh in his servants, is of a fixed and abiding nature, John xiii. 1. "Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." Rom. xi. 29. "The



“gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” This delight proceeds from the unchangeableness of God, and from the consideration of his well-beloved Son, through whom he is pleased with them. Forasmuch as God’s love to believers is laid and founded in Christ, therefore as he takes pleasure in his own Son, so also in them for his sake: for God can take pleasure in no person but in and through Christ.

5. *Lastly*, This delight that God takes in his people is operative and efficacious, producing correspondent love and affection in them to him. And so this delight is mutual and reciprocal. God delights in his people, and they delight in him; the latter the consequent and effect of the former. By this we may try our state, whether God delights in us. If we delight in him, and prefer fellowship and communion with him to all other things, we may certainly conclude that God taketh pleasure in us.

V. The next thing is to point out what it is in or about his people that the Lord taketh pleasure in.

1. He takes pleasure in their persons, Zech. ii. 8. “He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.” That which was said in a particular manner of Daniel, chap. ix. 23. *a man of desires*, or, as we translate it, *a man greatly beloved*, may be in a sort applied to all the people of God. They are persons in high favour and acceptance with God; and he is very much delighted in them; and that either as they are the church of God, and so bear his image, or as they are the workmanship of his hands, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, Eph. ii. 10. Hence he greatly desires their beauty, Psal. xlv. 11.

2. He takes peculiar delight in the graces of his people, Cant. iv. 9. “Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.” O how beautiful is the believer in the exercise of grace! Then he is all fair; and God not only admires them

himself, but he represents them as matter of admiration, and as worthy of notice, to others, John i. 47. "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." He delights in their uprightness, their humility, and their faith. In Matth. viii. we read of the centurion's humility. He had applied to the Lord Jesus to heal his servant; and Jesus had told him he would come and heal him. Upon this the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof." And then he gives a specimen of his faith: "but speak the word only," says he, "and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my servant, Do this, and he doth it." Upon hearing this, Jesus marvelled, and said to those about him, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." The faith of the woman of Canaan was as eminent; Matth. xv. She had humbly applied to Christ to cure her distressed daughter. But he answered her not a word; and said to his disciples when they addressed him to send her away, because she cried after them, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Notwithstanding this repulse, she still insists in her suit, saying, "Lord, help me." And notwithstanding the Lord's answering her, "It is not meet to take the childrens bread, and to cast it to dogs;" she repeats her humble plea, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. I own, Lord, I am a dog; yet give me a crumb of mercy." What was the consequence of this importunity of faith? "O woman," said our Lord unto her, "great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." He has a great delight in the repentance of his people, Jer. xxxi. 18. 19. 20. "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the



“yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for  
 “thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I  
 “was turned, I repented; and after that I was in-  
 “structed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed,  
 “yea, even confounded, because I did bear the re-  
 “proach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? is  
 “he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him,  
 “I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my  
 “bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have  
 “mercy upon him, saith the Lord.”

3. He taketh delight in the prosperity of his people, not only as a family, but in all the individual members of it; not only in their temporal, but much more in their spiritual prosperity; saying to each of them as the apostle to Gaius, 3 John 2. “Beloved, I wish  
 “above all things that thou mayst prosper and be in  
 “health, even as thy soul prospereth.”

4. He taketh delight in the performances and services of his people, Cant. ii. 14. Christ is there inviting the spouse to the duty of prayer, and the argument he urgeth to encourage her thereto, is the peculiar delight he has in it: “O my dove that art in  
 “the clefts of the rock,” says he, “in the secret  
 “places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let  
 “me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy  
 “countenance is comely.” He accepts their prayers. Thus he said to Job’s friends, chap. xlii. 8. “Go to  
 “my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-  
 “offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you;  
 “for him will I accept,” Job had acquaintance with God in prayer, which it seems his friends had not, or at least not so intimate an acquaintance. Thus it is said of Cornelius, chap. x. 4. “Thy prayers and thine  
 “alms are come up for a memorial before God.” Prov. xv. 8, “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abo-  
 “mination to the Lord; but the prayer of the up-  
 “right is his delight.”

5. *Lastly*, He takes pleasure in the sufferings of his people, who suffer for him when he calls them to it;

not for evil doing, but for a good cause, Psal. lvi. 8. Not a tear shed for sin or through affliction, but he takes notice of it; he keeps a book to record their wanderings in their going from place to place; and he bottles all their tears. In Rev. ii. 13. there is an honour put upon the church of Pergamos, "I know thy works," says Christ to her, "and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith;" and what a particular honour is put upon Antipas, who may be supposed to have been the pastor of that church! "even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." Thus honourable mention is made of the sufferings of the saints, Matth. v. 10. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And what an honour is put on the noble cloud of martyrs in Heb. xi.?

VI. Our next province is to assign some reasons of the doctrine, why the Lord's people are thus highly favoured.

Negatively, The Lord does not take pleasure in his people on account of any moral excellency or any natural sweet tempers in them. The young man in the gospel with all his moral virtues and lovely dispositions went away from Christ sorrowful, without being accepted. But positively,

1. The Lord takes pleasure in his people, because such a temper of spirit as hope and fear in them argues a reverent esteem of God and hope in his favour. God observes all mankind with his all-seeing eye; the wicked with an eye of indignation and displeasure, but those that fear him and hope in his mercy, with an eye of favour and complacency. *His countenance beholdeth the upright.*

2. Because being exercised in these two graces, they are thereby capacitated in a great measure to advance



the honour and glory of God. How will these affections of fear of and hope in God, tend to the glory of his name, when they influence his people not to stand upon trouble or persecution for the name and cause of Christ, but to follow him, and trust in his goodness! These keep their heads above water, without sinking. The Lord cannot but take pleasure in such persons, because these graces are the product of his own Spirit, and in the exercise of them his people stand up for his honour in their day and generation. *Those that honour me, says God, I will honour.*

3. Because, by the exercise of these graces, they notably discover themselves, by a distinguishing mark, to be his people: Mal. iii. 16. "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name." Observe what follows, ver. 17. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." As they distinguish themselves from the rest of the world, so God will dignify them above others.

4. Because of his good will and pleasure, and the merit of his dear Son; they are the purchase of Christ, bought at no less a price than his precious blood, Psal. civ. 31. 1 Pet. i. 18. God cannot but delight in those whom his Son bought at so dear a rate, and whom the Spirit hath taken so much pains upon to qualify and fit for his service. This is the success of Christ's mediatorial undertaking, and thus the pleasure of the Lord prospers in the Redeemer's hand, which cannot but be acceptable to God, Rom. iii. 24. Eph. ii. 8. Luke xii. 32.

5. God does so to counterbalance that hatred and contempt which the world seeks to put upon them. Because the world contemns them, he puts all respect upon them, and testifies his taking pleasure in them. This makes them bear up under all troubles, 1 Cor.

iv. 12. 13. "Being reviled, we bless: being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day." We see the opinion the world has of the saints, Acts xxii. 22. "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live." They do not think the people of God worthy to breathe in God's world. Yet God has a quite different opinion of them. We read of some, Heb. xi. 28. *of whom the world was not worthy.* God loves them here, and he takes them to himself when they have done their work on earth.

I now proceed to make some application of this subject.

1. See here that God's people, when the fear of God prevails in them, and they are most watchful, and their hope most lively, are not to build on these graces, but on the mercy of God only. It is true, the diligence of the sincere soul is always to be considered as a good sign of its sincerity; but the person is not to rest in it: for our best performances are attended with many imperfections. Therefore we must still have recourse to his mercy; for *there is mercy with him, that he may be feared.*

2. See here the mercy and goodness of God to them that fear him, that hope in his mercy; how he regards them, and accepts of them, their fear, faith, and hope, before all other things. God does not so much stand upon or accept of human help and natural means to co-operate with him for the deliverance and defence of his church and people, as he delights to assist the faith and prayers of his servants, when they are destitute of external helps and encouragements. Take the following instances and proofs of this: Psal. xxxiii. 16. 17. 18. "There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any



“by his great strength. Behold, the eye of the Lord  
 “is upon them that fear him: upon them that hope  
 “in his mercy.” The horse considered in itself is a  
 very useful creature, especially in the day of battle;  
 yet without God’s concurring with it, and assisting it,  
 it is of no force at all, Prov. xxi. 31. “The horse is  
 “prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of  
 “the Lord.” Eccl. ix. 18. 20. “Wisdom is better  
 “than strength.—Wisdom is better than weapons of  
 “war.”

To these proofs let me add a few instances where the  
 saints and people of God, by the strength and power  
 of faith and prayer, have been able to do more than  
 all their enemies, notwithstanding all their carnal and  
 external advantages. Thus it was with the Israelites,  
 when pursued by bloody Pharaoh and his whole army.  
 The latter had great advantages of horses, chariots,  
 and all manner of armour; and the former were a  
 poor, helpless, unarmed multitude, loaded with bag-  
 gage, and encumbered with a very great number of  
 weak women and young children attending them.  
 But what came all the strength of the Egyptian army  
 to in the issue? While the children of Israel passed  
 through the Red sea as on dry land, the waters swal-  
 lowed up the Egyptians, and their carcasses were  
 thrown out on the shore, as a signal monument of the  
 divine vengeance against them. There is no force a  
 match for the Strength of Israel. Thus Jabin king of  
 Canaan, with his general Sisera, took the field against  
 the Israelites, with nine hundred chariots of iron, and  
 a numerous army. But behold the issue: The Lord  
 discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host  
 with the edge of the sword, before Barak, and there  
 was not a man left: and Sisera himself fell by the  
 hands of a woman, Judg. iv. So also when the king  
 of Syria sent horses, and chariots, and a great host by  
 night to the city of Dothan, where the prophet Elisha  
 lived, who compassed it about; so that one might  
 think there was no possibility for the man of God to

escape; yet the faith of the prophet procured a greater strength than that which came to apprehend him; for the mountain was full of hosts and chariots of fire round about Elisha. Thus also when Sennacherib invaded Hezekiah's kingdom, and was coming to attack his capital, that pious king thus addressed his officers: 1 Chron. xxxii. 7. 8. "Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us, than with him. With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God, to help us, and to fight our battles." And when the Assyrian king advanced to Jerusalem, did he succeed in his enterprise? No: for in one night the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred fourscore and five thousand men: and the blasphemous invader soon after fell by the hands of two of his sons.

Thus the Lord has always had more delight and pleasure in those who fear him, and hope in his mercy, than in all human helps, refuges, and advantages whatever.

The second use of this doctrine may be by way of consolation to the servants and people of God. Here is great encouragement for you, that God takes pleasure in you.

1. It is comfortable, that you are hereby highly honoured and dignified. Is it not the highest preferment, that the God of heaven and earth takes delight in you? Is. xlii. 4. "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee."

2. It is comfortable in point of safety. The Lord delights in his people, and therefore he will protect them: Zech. ii. 8. "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye." Is. xxvii. 3. "I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."

3. It is comfortable in point of provision. God



will take care of his people, and see that nothing which is fit for them be wanting. The consideration, that they are in favour with God, should strengthen their faith in his providence: Psal. lxxxiv. 11. "The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Psal. xxxv. 27. "Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant." This is a comfortable meditation under the greatest perplexities and straits, Psal. cxlix. 4. "The Lord taketh pleasure in his people; he will beautify the meek with salvation."

A third use shall be by way of conviction. Let us be thoroughly convinced of this great truth, that God takes pleasure in his people. Although it be a certain fact, yet the people of God do not always readily believe and entertain it in their minds. Alas! there is a base and secret jealousy, which is apt oftentimes to arise in their minds, that God does not take that delight in them which he really does. Therefore it is necessary that they be thoroughly persuaded of it.

The ground of this suspicion in the Lord's people commonly is founded on his outward carriage and dispensations towards them. Hence they are ready to say, "Can the Lord take delight in us, when he corrects and chastises us so severely? on the contrary does he not hate us?" This was the mistake of Gideon, Judg. vi. 12. 13. When the angel of the Lord addressed him with this salutation, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour;" Gideon said unto him, "Oh my lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" He could not think that God's presence and corrections could consist together. Whereas it is a certain truth, that "whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," Heb. xii. 6. This also was the misapprehension of Zion, Is. xlix.

14. "Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." This is what the dearest saints and servants of God are subject to; therefore they have need to be well settled and confirmed in such an important truth, and to strengthen their hope and confidence in God.

I shall shut up all with an use of exhortation.

1. Let us be exhorted, by way of gratitude, to delight and rejoice in the Lord, because he delights in us. The scripture abounds with this counsel to the saints, that they solace themselves in God, and rejoice in him; and it well deserves their serious attention. Does the Lord delight in his people, and will they not, in return, take delight in him? Phil. iv. 4. "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice."

2. We should take pleasure in God's people, in imitation of the delight he takes in them. Does the Lord take pleasure in his people, and should they not take pleasure in one another? They are to dwell in the heavenly city for ever, and will they not delight in one another's society while they are travelling towards it? Let us love the saints, and esteem them the excellent of the earth, and the persons in whom we will place all our delight.

3. Does God take pleasure in his people? Then beware of doing any thing that may be hurtful and injurious to them. It is dangerous to wrong the favourite of a prince, because he is one in whom his master delights, and will certainly resent any injuries done him. Much more dangerous must it be to injure the friends of God and favourites of heaven. He will revenge all affronts done them, because he loves them. Love is strong as death, and jealousy is cruel as the grave. Love is a revengeful affection, and will trample on every thing that stands in its way, and goes cross to its purpose; and much more in the case now under consideration. Hence says the Lord, Zech.



1. 15. "I am very sore displeased with the Heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction," And hence he says to Edom, "Thou shouldst not have looked on the day of thy brother, in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction: neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress," Obad. ver. 12. Observe the consequence of this insolent and injurious behaviour, ver. 15. "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head."

4. Let all and every one be exhorted to nourish and cherish the two graces mentioned in the text; and to be constantly employed in the exercise of them.

(1.) Of fear. Solomon tells us, Prov. xxiii. 17. "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long." This disposes a man to that which is his duty. When Joseph would satisfy his brethren, that he intended no mischief against them, he gives them no other answer but this, *I fear God*, Gen. xlii. 18. While he did so, there was no likelihood that he would do any mean, unworthy, or injurious thing to them.

(2.) Of hope; of hope in the divine mercy, which is the source and spring of all blessings to poor miserable creatures. God is a God of mercy, and in him compassions flow. In his love to souls he has administered to us an occasion of hoping in his mercy through the Son of his love, and he accepts this hope from us, and will crown it with enjoyment. O then act and exercise this hope, as you would wish to please God, and be accepted of him; for it is well pleasing in his sight. Let us not cast away our confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. Let us endeavour by all means to cherish this heavenly plant of hope in our souls, which will support us amidst all dejection and discouragements. Let us say, The Lord be magnified, who hath wrought it in us. Amidst

all downcastings and fears, let our language be like that of David, Psal. xlii. 11. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God."

Upon the whole, remember on the one hand, that God is a holy jealous God, and therefore cannot bear with sin, or a state of sin, but that the fire of his jealousy burns hotly against it; and on the other, that the blood of Christ takes away all guilt, that his Spirit provides for the most desperate case, and that his mercy reaches wide to every condition. And therefore fear the Lord, and yet hope in him: Hope in his mercy, yet fear his wrath and displeasure on account of sin; for he taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy. The Lord beget and maintain these and every other grace in our souls, and to his name be everlasting praise. Amen.



## DISCOURSE XV.

### The Solemnity of Christ's second Coming \*.

#### REVELATION i. 7.

*Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.*

**M**Y friends, ye have been this day engaged in a very solemn work. Christ has been feasting some of you at his own table; he has been giving you the seals of his covenant, and ye have been sealing the covenant with him. Our Lord has been sacramentally crucified before you, and ye have been remembering his death till he come. This has been your work; and I know nothing more suitable upon this occasion, than to recommend to you the consideration of his coming again the second time.

This is the coming of Christ that John speaks of in the text; and it being so illustrious, he ushers it in with a *Behold*, to point out, that this important event challenges our earnest attention and most fixed regard.

But who is this person, may you say, who is to come, and whose coming demands our most serious notice? Look to the 5th verse, and you will see that it is he who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; even he who gave himself to be a propitiation for sin, and will come the second time without sin unto salvation, that is, without a sacrifice for sin, for the complete happiness of all the ransomed ones.

It is affirmed of this illustrious and renowned per-

\* Preached on Sabbath evening after the communion, at Barry.

sonage, that *he cometh*. It is not said, that he may or shall come, but that *he cometh*. His second coming is still in his eye, and he will surely come. He promised to come, and he is not slack concerning his promise.

But how doth he come? *He cometh with clouds*: not, as in his incarnation, in a mean and obscure condition, having his glory veiled and his dignity wrapt up as it were from the view of all; but with clouds, radiant and resplendent, which will add to the lustre of his glory, and make his coming the more illustrious and magnificent.

But who shall be the spectators of this glorious advent? *Every eye shall see him*. The whole descendents of Adam, that ever lived on the earth, shall have a sight of Christ with their bodily eyes, whether they be saints or sinners. *And they also that pierced him*, shall see him once more. Those who would not have the great God-man to reign over them, who cried, Away with him, Crucify him, who embrued their hands in his blood, and treated him as a deceiver and impostor, and were not saved by his death before they left the world, shall see him, to their eternal confusion and horror.

But what shall be the effect of this coming? *All kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him*. His coming will be a joyful event to all his faithful friends and followers; but those to whom the glad tidings of salvation through his obedience and satisfaction were published by the gospel, but who rejected him, and would not yield to the sceptre of his grace, nor submit to his righteousness as their only title for happiness, in all nations, kingdoms, and languages, shall wail and howl at his coming, as knowing the day of the wrath of the Lamb is come, and that they shall then feel the heaviest strokes of his vengeance, for their contempt of him.

The doctrine from which, through the assistance of divine grace, I would discourse, is this.



Doct. Our Lord Jesus Christ will come the second time. Behold he cometh, &c.

Here I will,

- I. Prove that Christ will come.
- II. Shew the manner of his coming.
- III. Point out for what ends and purposes he will come.
- IV. Make application in a few practical uses.

I. I am to prove, that Christ will come the second time. We all believe this; it is an article of our creed; though alas! it is little laid to heart by the generality of men, who live as if there were neither a heaven nor a hell, and none to call them to account for their conduct in the world. The proof of this important event is not founded on poetical fictions, or the traditions of the fathers; neither is it to be numbered among the reveries and delusions of the impostor Mahomet: but it is built on the following solid foundations.

1. The second coming of Christ rests on this firm basis, the immutability of the divine decree, Acts xvii. 31. "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

2. It is founded on the sure word of prophecy. Asaph speaks of it, Psal. l. 3. *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence.* Nay, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, in the antediluvian world, prophesied expressly of this memorable coming, Jude ver. 14. *Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, &c.*

3. There are many sweet promises of it scattered through the sacred oracles; as Psal. xvi. 10.—13. "He shall judge the world righteously. He cometh, he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his

"truth." Psal. xcvi. 8. 9. "He cometh to judge the earth," &c. Heb. ix. 28. "Unto them that look for him will he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." This was the grand promise ever kept afoot in the church, John xiv. 3. *I will come again, and receive you unto myself,* &c. The very scoffers took notice of it, saying, *Where is the promise of his coming?* 2 Pet. iii. 4.

4. That this coming might make deep impression on our minds, there were visional discoveries made of it to two of Christ's beloved servants, as Daniel, chap. vii. 13. and John, Rev. xx. 11.

5. It is attested by angels. There were two of these heavenly messengers dispatched from heaven to witness his ascension, Acts i. who declared to his disciples and those who attended him on that grand occasion, ver. 11. "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

6. It is founded upon Christ's own infallible promise, Matth. xxiv. 30. & xxvi. 64. John xiv. 3. Rev. xxii. 7. 12. 20.

7. It is built upon the pleasant and refreshing pledge of it, namely, the coming of the Holy Spirit into the hearts of believers. At parting betwixt friends, there is a taking and giving of tokens to discover their love to one another. Our Lord went away not in anger, but about business, to order all things for the great nuptial-day. And to prevent suspicion both of his love and coming again, he was pleased to leave the Spirit, to stir up in us a certain hope and earnest expectation of his coming, Rom. viii. 23. *The Spirit and the bride say, Come,* Rev. xxii. 17. The time is determined, and the marriage-day fixed, though unknown to us: but he has given his Spirit as a proof and pledge of it. O then try if you have this blessed pledge, stirring you up to an earnest desire after the consummation of the marriage with Christ.



8. The constant experience the believer has of Christ's unparalleled love to him, and his unceasing care of him, is a sure proof of his second coming. Blessed be his name, that faithful Christians are frequently receiving messages of love that pass between them and Christ; which shew he is neither forgetful of them nor strange to them. There is a constant intercourse kept up between every believer and Christ. Though he be absent from us in the body, yet we hear from him, and he is present with us, in the Spirit. We hear from him in the word, prayer, and in the sacraments: and will he not come again, think you; will he not come who is so mindful of us? He does not forget us, as the butler did Joseph at the court of Pharaoh. No; he minds us, and is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Heb. iv. 15. He is our life now, and therefore shall appear; and we shall also appear with him in glory, Col. iii. 4. O think much on these things, ye that are waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus.

9. *Lastly*, Christ's second coming is founded upon this; that there are ordinances appointed in the church to keep up the remembrance of it; the word preached, and the Lord's supper. See 1 Cor. xi. 26. "As often as ye of this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." He hath left this ordinance as a monument of his faithfulness, and a sweet pledge of his love, to revive our hopes and expectations. And would Christ institute a solemn ordinance for the remembrance of his appearing, if he were not to come again to us? No, surely. Yea, the word declares it, 1 Tim. iv. 1. "The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom."

II. I come now to shew the manner of Christ's coming at the last day.

1. Christ will then come personally. There will be no proxy admitted in this matter, neither will there

he need for any: 1 Thess. iv. 16. 17. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Acts i. 11. forecited. These passages note unto us, that as Christ had a personal translation and visible elevation, being taken up before the eyes of his disciples; so he shall bodily descend. "The Lord himself shall come."

2. He will come visibly, Matth. xxvi. 64. "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Chap. xxiv. 30. "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." All the sons of Adam shall see the radiant coming of Christ, the wicked to their consternation and amazement, and the godly to their joy and consolation.

3. He will come with observation. This coming shall be remarkable and illustrious. The day of his appearance is called *one day*, Zech. xiv. 7. in respect of eminency; because it will be eminently conspicuous. Job was persuaded of this, when he said, chap. xix. 25. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."

4. His coming will be glorious, Matth. xxv. 31. *The Son of man shall come in his glory.* Many things will concur to render it glorious.

The dignity of his person, being God-man, will make his coming glorious. It is said, Matth. xiii. 43. that "the righteous shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." And if they shall so shine, how much more gloriously shall Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine? The saints, the most elevated believers, are but creatures, not deified when they are glorified; but he is God-man in one person, The saints are but



members of the mystical body; but Christ is the head, and therefore must far exceed the glory of the members. The glory of believers is but a derived ray; but Christ himself is the body of light and splendor. We read, 2 Thess. i. 10. that "he shall come to be glorified" in his saints, and admired in all them that believe," that is, in the glory he puts upon them. All the numerous croud of spectators shall then stand admiring the honour he puts upon them who have newly crept out of dust and rottenness. But how much more will he be admired for his own personal glory! We read, Matth. xxv. 31. that "Christ will come in his glory;" and chap. xvi. 27. that "the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father." He shall come in his own glory; that is, not in the form of a servant, as in his humbled estate, but in a way becoming his exalted condition. All the infirmities he took on him shall be entirely removed. It is not a borrowed glory, but his own, properly speaking. And it is said to be in the glory of his Father, and in his own glory. The Son of man and the Son of God are one person; and his glory as God and his Father's glory are the same. This denotes either his divine power and majesty which shall then be conspicuously displayed, or the glory put upon the human nature; and so it points out his plenary absolution as our Surety; for then *he will appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation*, Heb. ix. 28.

Again, his coming will be glorious in respect of his royal attendants and retinue, Matth. xxv. 31. "And the holy angels with him." Chrysostom saith, that the whole court of heaven will remove with him; which are a very numerous company; for "the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints," &c. Jude 14. It is likely, says Dr Manton, that these angels will put on some visible shape, for the greater glory and majesty of Christ's appearing. For as he will appear in his human body upon his glorious throne, so will his legions round about him; whose order, power, and formida-

ble hosts must some way or other be seen by the wicked for their greater terror. Their attendance upon Christ seems to be for the following reasons.

(1.) Partly for a train to make his appearance more full of majesty. We find angels waited upon him at his ascension, and so will they wait on him at his coming to judgement. Public ministers of justice are made formidable by their attendants; and Christ will come as a great King in the midst of his nobles.

(2.) That partly by their ministry, the work of the day may be the more speedily and powerfully dispatched. They are to "gather the elect from the four winds," Matth. xxiv. 31. The angels that carried their souls to heaven, shall be employed in bringing their bodies out of their graves. Hence we read of Lazarus's soul being carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22. They are serviceable to the saints while on the earth; and this is the last office they are to perform unto them. They are as it were, under Christ, guardians of their bones and dust. As to the wicked, they are to *bind the tares in bundles*, Matth. xiii. 41. that they may be burnt in the fire. They will force and present wicked men before the Judge, be they ever so obstinate. They are witnesses in and attendants upon congregations met for religious worship, 1 Cor. ix. 10. In our assemblies there is more company than is visible. Devils and angels meet there; the former to divert your minds as soon as they begin to be serious, and to catch the good word out of your heart; and the latter to observe your behaviour; and therefore there should be no indecency in it.

*Quest.* But will the angels be judged at the last day?

*Ans.* As to the good angels, it is clear that they will be present at this solemnity, not to be judged, but to bring others to judgement; as officers, not as parties. It is true, they have a charge and ministry about the saints, Heb. i. 14.: but of that ministry and charge they give an account daily in the sight of God; to



whom they approve themselves in it, so that there is no occasion for any further inquisition concerning them, and no necessity for their being brought into judgement.

As to the evil angels, scripture is exprefs, that they shall be judged, 1 Cor. v. 3. 2 Pet. ii. 4. But I cannot now stand upon this.

Thus you see that the good angels will attend Christ at his second coming. At his first appearance in human nature few saw any beauty or glory in him but they; as appears from Matth xvi. 27. Luke ix. 26. Zech. xiv. 17. Dan. vii. 9. 10. 2 Theff. i. 7. Jude 14.

Moreover, the coming of Christ will be glorious in this respect, that there will be clouds at his beck and service. These celestial bodies will be the triumphant chariots of the Son of God, wherein he will magnificently appear, and come to judge the world.

5. He shall come terribly: Is. xiii. 9. "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it." Rev. vi. 17. "The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" O thou despiser of the amiable Jesus, thou profaner of his holy name and day, how wilt thou then be able to abide this terrible coming?

6. He will come unexpectedly. Though it be true, that there shall be immediate warnings and signs of his coming, such as, the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and the sun, moon, and stars shall be darkened; yet these shall take place but a very little before his coming. But the coming of Christ shall be when men are not aware of it, nor looking for it. As in the days of Noah, men were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, when the flood came and destroyed them; so shall the Son of man come. Hence it is that you read in some passages of scripture, that Christ will come as a thief in the night. The thief comes in the dead of the night, when men

are drowned in sleep, without any expectation of such an unwelcome guest. So Christ's coming at the great day will be equally unexpected and unlooked for, at a time when the most part of men will be buried in security and ease.

III. I proceed to shew for what ends and purposes Christ will thus come.

I. That he may manifest his own glory. His glory was very much obscured at his first coming. Then he came in the form of a servant: but now he cometh as the Lord and Heir of all things, in power and great glory. At his first coming he had John the Baptist as his harbinger, the voice of one crying in the wilderness; but now he hath for his forerunner an archangel, by whose voice, as the trump of God, the dead shall rise out of their graves. Formerly he came attended by twelve disciples, a few poor fishermen, of mean condition in the world; but at last he will come with legions of angels, myriads of saints, Jude ver. 14.

At his first coming he acted the part of a minister of the circumcision, preaching the gospel to the people of Israel only. Now he cometh as the Judge of all the world. Then he invited men to repentance, and offered remission of sins to all those who would own him as their Redeemer. Now he cuts off all hope of pardon for ever from those who refused or despised his grace.

Then he offered himself as a Mediator between God and Man, to God as an High Priest, to us as an Apostle, Heb. iii. 1. But now he comes as a Judge and Avenger.

Then he veiled his divine nature under the infirmities of the flesh, and did but sparingly emit the rays of his majesty. But now he shall appear in the glory of his Father.

Then he wrought some miracles, which his enemies imputed to diabolical arts and magical impostures. Now there will be no need of miracles to assert and



vindicate the divinity of his person; for the whole assembled world shall see the brightest characters of Deity in him.

Heretofore he raised a few dead persons to life; but now all the dead shall be raised by him.

Then he prepared himself to suffer death. Now he will tread death under foot, and totally expel him from his kingdom.

Then he stood before the tribunals of men, that he might be condemned to the ignominious death of the cross. Now he shall sit upon a more glorious throne than that of Solomon's; which you read of, 2 Chron. ix. 17. He shall be seated upon a glorious throne, all kings and potentates of the earth expecting their final doom and sentence from his mouth.

Then he came not to judge, but to save. Now he comes to render to every one according to their works.

Then he was scorned, buffeted, and spit upon. Now he is crowned with glory and unspeakable honour.

Then he came to bear the sins of many. Now he appears without sin unto salvation, even the salvation of those that look for him, Heb. ix. 28. not bearing our burdens, but bringing our discharge; not as a Surety, but as a paymaster; not as a sufferer, but as a conqueror, triumphing over death, hell, and the devil.

Finally, he cometh, never to go from us any more, but to take us from all misery to himself. O, how may your hearts leap in you for joy, who have come to him on this solemn occasion, or at other occasions of this nature, and are still coming to him, that he will come again, and receive you to himself, that where he is, there ye may be also!

2. He will come again, that he may possess what he hath purchased. He bought us at a very dear rate, even with the immense price of his precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 18. 19.; and would he be at all this cost and

preparation for nothing? Surely he that came to suffer, will come to triumph; and he that so dearly bought, will come to possess. He loved his people unto death, and they loved him above their lives. For his people's sake he sanctified himself to his mediatory office, for their sake he came at first, and for their sake he will return, that he may cause them to inherit all the felicity he has prepared for them, John xiv. 3.

3. He will come again to take vengeance on his enemies, and to triumph over them in their final overthrow. God bringeth them down now by pieces, but then he will bring them down altogether. He got himself a glorious name, when he triumphed over Pharaoh and his Egyptian host at the Red sea; but that was but one enemy, and that only in the sight of Israel. But now all his enemies shall be put under his feet, in the sight of the whole world. Read the following scriptures, Is. xlv. 23. Rom. xiv. 10. 11. compared with Phil. ii. 10. He will make all those who have undervalued and despised him, to see his glory to their shame and confusion. Then he will be thoroughly avenged, 2 Thess. i. 7.—“taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” That is a very dreadful passage. O ye that are yet in a Christless state, think seriously of it, that ye may be awakened to a sense of your danger, and may make peace with this almighty avenger.

4. He will come again to judge the world, Psal. xcvi. ult. There will be a great white throne erected, before which all that innumerable tribe that ever lived on the earth, will be solemnly convened, from whom he will require a strict account of their whole management and deportment while in the world. The scripture is full of proofs as to this point, Matth. xxv. 31. Acts xvii. 31. 2 Cor. v. 10. Acts x. 42. Rev. xx. 11. 12. &c. O sinners, consider, whether ye will or no, Christ will make you wait upon him at that awful day. Ye that perhaps sit lolling at



home, and seldom wait upon Christ in public ordinances, will then be obliged to sit yourselves at his tremendous bar.

5. He will come to disclose all the hidden wickedness that has ever been perpetrated since the world began, *Is. xxvi. 21.* "Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." Think upon this with terror, ye whoremongers and adulterers, ye thieves and beastly sinners, who fly to lurking-places to commit your abominable wickedness, and sin against God under cloud of night. The divine Judge, who is witness to all your filthy and brutish practices, will bring them forth before the whole world, to your everlasting shame and disgrace.

6. He will come to reward all his faithful followers and upright servants. Then shall all the fast friends and trusty adherents of Christ experience the truth of that assertion, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous*, a reward flowing from rich and sovereign grace; and that none ever served him for nought. All the services that ever any saint did to God and his Christ, shall then be openly and amply rewarded, to the surprise and joy of the happy persons thus so gloriously recompensed.

7. *Lastly*, He will come, that he may deliver up the kingdom to the Father. The conduct and leading of all the elect was given to Christ by his Father. He is a faithful Captain to all who insist under his royal banner, and prove faithful to him; so that he will suffer none of them to perish. But now the way and manner of his administration will cease. At the last day there will be no more need of praying and preaching, or of any of the other ordinances which are now so precious to the saints on earth. They will then be ever reading love in Christ's face, and swimming in an eternal ocean of felicity and joy. Christ will then deliver up the kingdom to the Fa-

ther, 1 Cor. xv. 24. When he hath got all his elect seed, all those that were given him by the Father to be redeemed, into one body, and assembled them into one great congregation, then he will solemnly present them to God, as a prey snatched out of the teeth of the ravenous lion, Heb. ii. 13. Then he will say, "O my blessed and everlasting Father, behold me, and the children I have begotten again to thee. Though they were lost, now they are found. O blessed company! they shall be olive-plants round about thy table. Come, my children, and ye blessed of my Father, take possession of my rich purchase; enter into the mansions I have prepared for you; be with me for ever, never to part more."

I now proceed to the practical improvement of this subject, which I shall discuss in a fourfold use; namely, of trial, terror, consolation, and exhortation.

USE I. is for trial, by answering two very important questions.

*Quest. 1.* Who shall not be able abide the day of Christ's coming? This is a question that merits your particular attention; and which every one of you should be putting to your own consciences. I shall give you the characters of those who shall not be able to abide this coming, in the following particulars.

1. All Atheistical scoffers, who ridicule revealed religion, and impugn the doctrine of Christ's coming. Of such wretches you read, 2 Pet. iii. 4. "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Jude 18. "There shall be mockers in the last time, who shall walk after their own ungodly lusts." We read also of the philosophers of Athens, who questioned the truth of a resurrection, and of a judgement, and mocked at it, Acts xvii. 32.



And alas, there are too many of these wicked scoffers in our degenerate times. To all such I shall only say, that the day of Christ's coming will be a dreadful day to them, and put an end to all their impious scoffs.

1. All ungodly and profane sinners, who wallow in impious and lewd practices, shall tremble at this awful day. Many have not arrived at that height of impiety as to deny this doctrine; but profane swearers, drunkards, fornicators, sabbath-breakers, &c. shall not be able to abide Christ's second coming. O poor wretched man or woman that profanest the holy and tremendous name of God; what will become of thee? how wilt thou abide the coming of the almighty Judge? I tremble, Sirs, to mention the dreadful imprecations which some of you use in your common conversation. Is it not dreadful to hear a man saying, Damn his soul, and praying to God for damnation, perhaps more earnestly than ever he did for salvation? O poor soul, what would become of thee if thy prayer had been heard? Thou hadst by this time been yelling and howling among the damned spirits in hell. O bless God, that he has spared thee, and forsake this hellish way of speaking; apply to Christ for pardon of this thy great sin, and utter no more the language of the bottomless pit. Another imprecation that is too too common among you is, The devil take yourselves or others. O man, let me tell thee, the devil wants no more but a permission to hale thy poor soul into unquenchable flames. O forsake this dreadful way of speaking; and all your minced and profane oaths; and turn unto the Lord with thy whole heart, craving pardon through the blood of Jesus. For I testify unto thee this day, that if thou persist in these wicked practices, thou wilt not be able to abide Christ's second coming, but the imprecations thou prayed for to thyself, shall then come upon thee to the uttermost. O consider that passage, Psal. i. 5. "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous."

3. Neither shall grossly-ignorant persons be able to

stand the day of his coming. Alas! there are many among us who despise knowledge and the means of instruction. Not a few are stupidly ignorant of God and the principles of Christianity, and will be at no pains to be taught the things that belong to their peace. Let such remember, that, in the great day of dread and decision, he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

4. All hypocrites shall be in the same situation. The visible church is filled with people of this character, who assume a profession of religion, but are strangers to the power and reality thereof. "The sinners in Zion shall be afraid; fearfulness shall surprise the hypocrites. Who among them shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among them shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

5. All unconverted persons shall tremble at the day of Christ's coming. "Except a man be born again," said our Lord, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." O man, O woman, if thou undergo not the pangs of the new birth, if thou passest not through the strait gate of regeneration, and walkest not in the narrow way of holiness, thou wilt not be able to abide the day of Christ's coming. Be converted then, that thy sins may be blotted out, ere this awful day come.

6. All impenitent and unbelieving sinners shall not be able to abide this coming of Christ. They would not come to him for life while they were in the world; they refused to honour the Son of God, by believing in his name, and remained impenitent notwithstanding all the loud calls he gave them to repentance. Now they shall be condemned for ever: Rev. xxi. 8.

"But the fearful, and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and forcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." John iii. 36.

"He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life;



“and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life;  
“but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

7. *Lastly*, All unworthy communicants shall stand aghast at this dreadful coming of the Son of God. Ye who have approached to the holy table of the Lord, without being clothed with the wedding-garment of Christ's imputed righteousness, and without those holy dispositions and affections which are absolutely requisite for the suitable participation of that holy ordinance, ye have thereby crucified Christ afresh, and have put him to open shame. I testify unto you, that if you live and die in this sin, without faith's application to the blood of Jesus, and thorough repentance, ye shall be so far from being enabled to stand in the judgement, that ye shall undergo the severest lashes of almighty vengeance. O consider this in time, and flee to the Saviour while yet on a throne of grace.

*Quest. 2.* Who are they that shall be able to abide Christ's second coming?

1. Such who are looking and longing for his appearing. And it may be safely affirmed, that there never was a child of God, but who, at some time or other, especially when admitted to sweet fellowship with him through Christ, but longed most earnestly for that happy day. Hence the apostle speaks of it as a distinguishing character of the saints, their *looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God*, 2 Pet. iii. 12.

2. Those who are born again, become new creatures, and are united to Christ by faith: for “unto those that are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation;” and certainly such persons can abide the day of his coming, as the best day they ever saw. Such may well say, “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory,” Col. iii. 4. and with the beloved disciple, 1 John iii. 2. “We know, that when he shall appear,

we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

3. All who are quickened by the Spirit of Christ, and have him dwelling in them; for their "life is hid with God in Christ," Col. iii. 3. and therefore it must be manifested, that they are living members of his body, at the last day, by their mortal bodies being quickened, by his Spirit that dwelleth in them, Rom. viii. 11.

4. All who shall be found in Christ, clothed with his righteousness, and desire to stand before God in the garments of their elder brother; and who, as an evidence of looking for their sole acceptance with God through the obedience and satisfaction of their Redeemer, deny themselves, and despise all things in comparison of him. This made Paul so solicitous to "count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord,—and to count them but dung; that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 7. 8.

5. All who are in covenant with God, by taking hold of the covenant of grace, which stands fast in Christ; all who have dedicated and devoted themselves to the Lord, conformably to the tenor of that sweet passage, which I would have you specially remark, viz. II. xlv. 5. "One shall say, I am the Lord's: and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob: and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Our Lord loves all persons of that character now, and will own them at his coming: Psal. l. 5. "Gather my saints together unto me," says he; "those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice." Upon comparing the context, you will easily see that this passage relates to our blessed Lord's coming.



6. All who have believed in the Lord Jesus, and cordially received him as offered to them in the gospel, and as they have received him, have endeavoured so to walk in him. He will esteem such to be his jewels, his precious ones; give them the highest pledges of his love, and own them as his people before the whole assembled world.

7. *Lastly*, All who walk holily in all manner of life and conversation, studying to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things; all who are consequently preparing for his coming, according to his exhortation, Matth. xxiv. 42. "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." To such Christ's coming will be no matter of surprise, but a most joyful event.

USE II. of terror to all who shall not be able to abide the day of Christ's coming.

Is Christ coming? O then this is dreadful news to all who shall not be found in Christ at that awful day. For,

1. He will then be your enemy. The face of the now meek and patient Lamb of God will then be turned into that of a lion roaring against you, and you will not be able to flee from him. No reconciliation can be effected with him at that day. Nay, you will feel the bitterest effects of his dreadful displeasure throughout eternal ages.

2. The work and business that Christ is coming about at that day, will be matter of terror to all who are not found in him: for he will then come to "take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and punish them with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," 2 Theff. i. 8. 9.

3. The consideration of all that you have done against Christ, will then be a terror to you. You that are enemies to Christ now, will then call to remembrance the several acts of hostility and rebellion which

ye committed against him, all your iniquities and transgressions ye were guilty of; and the recollection will make you a magor-missabib, a fear round about. Consider this in time.

4. The manner of Christ's coming will be a terror to you. Will not the highest terror seize you, when you hear the sound of the last trumpet, proclaiming, Arise, ye dead, and come to judgement; when ye see the bones of the dead with a rattling noise flying, as it were, through the air to meet one another, tho' they have been scattered through many places, as the Levite's concubine was cut into twelve parts, and sent to all the tribes of Israel? And will you not meditate terror, when you see your own dust moving in order to form again that ugly body which your polluted soul is to dwell in amidst torments for ever? Every circumstance of this awful solemnity will be most terrible to all impenitent sinners. Oh! that they would now be prevailed with to flee from the wrath to come.

5. The consideration that there will be no possibility of escaping from judgement, or avoiding appearance at Christ's tribunal, will be most terrible to you. You shall see him coming in the clouds, with all his holy angels; but you cannot escape from him by all possible arts and subterfuges. We find in Rev. vi. 15.—17. what terror the coming of Christ strikes into the hearts of great and small who have died in their sins, and how unavailing all their cries and contrivances for shelter are. O think upon this, ye that now make sinful shifts and excuses to keep Christ out of your hearts, and exclude the thoughts of death and judgement; think of it in time, and receive Christ into your hearts and houses, that ye may not be overwhelmed with terror at his awful coming.

6. The sentence that will be pronounced against them will be most terrible, Matth. xxv. 41. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." O how dreadful will



this sentence be? "What! shall we depart from thee, the fountain of life and happiness! from thy presence, where there is fulness of joy, and from thy right hand, where are pleasures for evermore; from thee, into the society of devils and damned spirits!" "Yes," will Christ say, "depart from me the Lord of life and glory; from me who came through a world of miseries, sorrows, and sufferings to seek and save you, but ye would not; from me who many times stood knocking at the doors of your hearts, but ye would not open, and give me admission; from me who exercised you with prosperous providences, that my goodness might lead you to repentance, and with adversity, that the rod might reclaim you from your impious courses; but neither mercies could draw nor judgments drive you." "But whither shall we depart?" may they say. "Into everlasting fire," will the Judge answer, "prepared for the devil and his vassals." O sad and terrible tidings, to depart from the ocean of happiness into the ocean of misery and endless woe; where nothing is to be had but punishment intolerable, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. "They shall go away," says Christ, ver. 46. "into everlasting punishment;" "from me and my saints, my God, my heaven, my joys; and let me never, never see their faces any more." Awake, O sinners, out of your sleep in time; and hearken unto the voice of the Saviour now offering himself unto you with all his grace and salvation: for if ye do not, be verily assured that at the last day ye will be turned into hell, soul and body, with all the nations that forget God.

7. *Lastly*, The execution of the sentence passed against them at Christ's coming, will be amazingly terrible, Matth. xiii. 30. "Gather together the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them." "Here is a bundle of unbelievers and impenitent sinners, there is a bundle of hypocrites; here is a bundle

" of swearers, drunkards, sabbath-breakers, liars, " fornicators, &c. and there is a bundle of mockers, " despisers of God and serious religion. Let all these " bundles be thrown with a vengeance into the fiery " lake, and let them feel the wrath of God to the " uttermost." O terrible ! what yelling, shrieking, and howling will be among these bundles, when the infernal pit opens its wide mouth, to swallow them up at one yawn ! Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings ? If this awful scene do not awaken sleepy and careless souls now, surely their consciences are seared as with a hot iron : but they will be awakened to purpose in hell-flames, when the door of mercy is shut for ever.

USE III. of consolation to the godly, to all honest communicants, to those that are in Christ, and resolve in his strength to cleave to him with purpose of heart, to all that believe in the Lord Jesus, who seek his blessed face, obey him from the heart, and so will be able to abide his second coming.

1. You may rejoice and be glad at that day, because ye loved, longed and looked for this his coming, saying with the spouse, " When will the day break, and " the shadows flee away ?" And now the day of your redemption is come, and all clouds and shadows shall for ever vanish.

2. Christ's second coming will be joyful to such, because of the near relation they stand in to him, and he to them. He is their God, their King, their Redeemer, their Goel, their Kinsman, their Brother, their Father, their Husband, nay their all. They are his jewels, his children, his spouse, his bride, his love, his fair one. And now they are to rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and is now to be solemnized with all holy joy and festivity.

3. You will then rejoice, because your King is come to deliver you from the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, and finally to conquer all his and your enemies. The Lord will then bruise Satan under



your feet, and ye shall be no more annoyed by that hissing serpent, nor plagued any more with his fiery darts.

4. Then every thing that separated between your dear Redeemer and you shall be effectually removed; the vail shall be taken from off your faces, the scales shall fall off your eyes, and you will see clearly him whom your souls love. And this sight shall never be eclipsed or overclouded; but you shall delight in the sight of him for ever.

5. They will rejoice, because he is come to take them home to himself, John xiv. 3. that where he is, there they may be also. They have been long separated from him; but now they shall be brought home to his Father's house, therein to abide for ever.

6. They will rejoice, because of the honour and glory that will then be put upon them, 1 John iii. 2. Col. iii. 4. They will be honoured to sit on thrones, nay, to sit as assessors with Christ, judging devils and wicked men, 1 Cor. vi. 2. 3.

7. It will be ground of joy to them at that day, that now they are ever to be with their God and Lord, and spend an endless eternity in the full enjoyment of him. The apostle comforts himself and others with this, 1 Thess. iv. 16. 17. 18.

USE IV. of exhortation. Is it so that Christ is coming? O then prepare to meet him. The cry is sounding, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.* Prepare for your Lord's coming, and delay it no longer.

I shall conclude with a few directions.

1. With all haste flee to Christ, and lay hold of eternal life through him. Ye that are yet out of Christ, consider that your state is deplorable while you continue in that condition. A hungry man has not more need of meat, nor a thirsty man of drink, nor a naked man in a frosty day of cloathing, than you have of the almighty Saviour. O then speedily come to him. He is yet on a throne of grace, ready to receive you.

Yea Christ is come forth in the evening of this high communion-day, inviting and entreating you to come to him that you may be saved. He is now knocking at the door of your hearts, saying, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me," Rev. iii. 20. And we his servants make a new offer of him to you this evening, and we take witnesses upon it, that we have done so. O come then, sinner, to the blessed Jesus, and take his grace and salvation. But if, after all this, thou wilt yet stand out against Christ, and the offers of his rich mercy and love, this will highly aggravate thy sin, and heighten thy condemnation. It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgement, than for thee.

2. Labour to get the oil of grace in your lamps, in your souls. Do not satisfy yourselves with the empty lamp of an external profession, but study to have the root of the matter in you. Study to grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Seek after, carefully keep, and diligently exercise grace. Never rest till you be acquainted with the life and power of religion and godliness.

3. Study to be for Christ while you are in this world. Speak forth the honour of his name, and make his praise glorious. Speak for him, and live to him. Appear for him against the wicked, and stand up against the workers of iniquity. Adhere firmly to the truths and doctrines of revelation, contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Cleave to his ordinances, and the purity of worship established amongst us, and the ecclesiastical government settled by law. Do Christ all the service you can in your respective stations, making your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.

4. Improve what Christ has bestowed upon you. Have you got grace, and grace strengthened? see that you improve and cultivate it. Every one has parti-



cular talents given him by Christ, with this charge, *Occupy till I come*. If so, how nearly does it concern you to be improving and exercising those conferred on you? How highly will Christ commend you, if you do so, at the last day! "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

5. Meditate much on the coming of Christ. Think with thyself, that thou seest him coming through the clouds. Jerome thought, that, where-ever he was, he heard a voice behind him, crying, *Surgite, mortui, et venite ad judicium*;—"Arise, ye dead, and come to judgement." Such a meditation would be a notable antidote against sin, and an incentive to holiness. Think of the last judgement every day, and be habitually ready for it.

6. Keep a loose hold of the world. The more you are disengaged from it, the less you are conformed to it, the better you will be prepared for Christ's coming.

7. *Lastly*, Be watchful, much exercised in prayer, and be daily on your watch-tower, looking out for your Lord's coming. Matth. xxiv. 42. "Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Mark xiii. 35. 36. "Watch ye therefore, (for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning), lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." Luke xxi. 36. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." 1 Pet. iv. 7. "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." I close all with the following scripture, wishing the Lord may bless the whole, 1 John ii. 28. "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

28 SE60

F I N I S.

Edinburgh, Nov. 21. 1772.

*Latest published, and given gratis,*

Proposals for printing by Subscription,

*(A Work never before printed),*

**AN ILLUSTRATION of the DOCTRINES of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, with regard to both FAITH and PRACTICE, upon the Plan of the ASSEMBLY'S SHORTER CATECHISM, in a Course of Sermons upon each Question of that valuable Composition.**

Comprehending a complete Body of Divinity.

By the late Reverend and Learned Mr THOMAS BOSTON,

Minister of the Gospel at Estrick,

Author of the Fourfold State, View of the Covenants of Works and Grace, and other valuable Treatises.

This book will consist of three very large volumes Octavo, and will be printed on a fine paper, with an elegant Pica type.

A volume will be published every third month, and delivered to subscribers in boards, price 4 s. each.

The book is peremptorily to be put to the press in the end of December, and carried on without interruption.

It is earnestly entreated, that all who incline to encourage this excellent work, will give in their names to the publishers as soon as possible, that the number of copies to be printed may be ascertained.

None need delay subscribing in hopes of getting the book cheaper afterwards; for no more copies will be printed than are subscribed for; and the price is as low as it can be afforded at, considering the expence of transcribing so large a work for the press, and that of paper and printing.

As this is the greatest and most useful work of the great Mr BOSTON that has hitherto appeared, it is hoped that the purchasers of his former pieces, and all who would peruse the best and most comprehensive explication of the Shorter Catechism that has yet been published, will shew a disposition to usher it into the world.

The original manuscript in the Author's hand-writing, with a considerable part of it already transcribed and prepared for the press, is in the hands of J. REID Printer in Bailie Pyfe's close.

Subscriptions are taken in by W. GRAY, front of the Exchange, and W. DARLING, Bridge-street, Booksellers; by J. REID Printer, Bailie Pyfe's close, and by the Rev. Mr MICHAEL BOSTON Minister of the Gospel at Falkirk, the Author's grandson, under whose inspection the work will be published.



Lately published, and sold by W. GRAY, front of the Exchange,  
W. DARLING, Bridge-street, and J. REID printer, Bailie  
Fyfe's close, Price 2 s. 6 d. bound,

*(A work never before printed),*

## A VIEW of the COVENANT of WORKS from the SACRED RECORDS.

W H E R E I N

The parties in that covenant, the reality of it, its parts conditional, promissory, and minatory, our father Adam's breaking of it, the imputation of that breach to his posterity, and the state of man under that broken covenant, and under the curse thereof, are distinctly considered.

T O G E T H E R W I T H

Some Sermons on the method of recovery from the ruins of the fall by Jesus Christ, and the difference between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.

By the late Reverend and Learned

Mr T H O M A S B O S T O N,

Minister of the Gospel at Ettrick,

Author of the Fourfold State, View of the Covenant of Grace, &c.

28 SE60

*Where may be had, price 2 s. 6 d. bound,*

MEMOIRS of two YOUNG GENTLEMEN; containing glorious displays of the efficacy of sovereign grace in the conversion of several profligate sinners, &c. &c.

